

**Future self-guides and language learning engagement of  
English-major secondary school students in Libya:  
Understanding the interplay between possible selves and the  
L2 learning situation**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

In 1990, secondary schools in Libya were transformed into specialized schools; a move, which require all Libyan students to choose a specialty subject which would become the focus of their secondary school learning and determine the academic direction of their future education. This ethnographically-oriented mixed-methods study is concerned with the motivation to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among students in English-specialty secondary schools in Libya. Conceptually, this study builds on Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Motivational Self-System with the aim to investigate empirically a largely unexplored area within this theoretical framework: the relationship between the learners' possible L2 selves and their L2 learning situation.

The study was conducted in one secondary school in the north west of Libya over a period of one academic year. The data come from a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data provide a bigger picture of English specialty secondary school students' motivational orientations, future self guides and their interaction with classroom-specific variables. The focus of the qualitative component is on three key student participants from the same school with the aim to obtain a fine-grained picture from interviews, classroom observations and student diaries of the interaction between their future self guides, their learning experience and their engagement in learning tasks in EFL classes.

The findings show that the relationship between the L2 learning situation and the L2 selves is an intricate and complex one. First, the L2-self construct itself has emerged from this study as a complex nested system of multiple L2 visions that the students entertain in their working self-concept as they choose their specialty. The findings further indicate that the L2 learning situation plays a key role in foregrounding or, in contrast, rendering irrelevant specific L2 selves that the students bring to the L2 learning situation. And finally, the study shows that the students constantly negotiate the relationship between their future guides and their L2 learning situation by either adjusting and adapting their L2 visions in order to give meaning to their L2 learning experience or by actively engaging or disengaging with aspects of their learning situation in order to remain connected with their well defined future L2 selves.

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Finally, I dedicate this thesis to the souls of those who recently lost their lives in the Libyan uprising and everyone who took part in ending the evil dictatorship in Libya and in bringing freedom and hope to the country. I will be no further from the truth if I said it was the sacrifice of those brave heroes which motivated me most of all to complete this thesis and go home to do my share in the rebuild of the new Libya.

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# INTRODUCTION

## ***ORIGINS OF THE STUDY***

When I was working as an assistant lecturer in the English department of a small university in the north west of Libya in 2004, I had the privilege of teaching a group of first-year students who had just completed three years of secondary-level education in English-speciality secondary schools. This group of students was the first group to graduate from secondary school as English majors after the new system of *specialized* secondary schools had replaced the old *general* secondary schools in Libya in the late 1990s. In these specialized secondary schools, students have to specialize in one speciality subject when they enrol with the school, and they are expected to continue studying the same subject when they progress to the university level of education. As my involvement with this particular group of students progressed, I became fascinated with their attitudes to English learning and the learning behaviour which they brought with them to my classes, which were remarkably different from what I have experienced before. These students were more enthusiastic to learn, they asked more, and generally had a more positive attitude to English learning than the students who came from the old general secondary schools and who had only studied English as a compulsory subject.

As a teacher, I have always maintained a close relationship with my students and often listen to their concerns about their learning experiences. I often asked my students why they decided to major in English, to which they typically answered because they liked English or wanted to achieve particular future goals. What captivated my interest with this particular group of students were their stories concerning how their initial goals,

hopes, expectations and aspirations changed and transformed as they become engaged in the experience of classroom learning in such a way that they often ended up with different goals and hopes from the ones they started with. It was these stories which prompted my desire to seek deeper understanding of the factors which make young Libyan students at the age of 14 and 15 years old decide to specialize in English and, more importantly, to understand what actually happens to their goals, hopes, and expectations as they become engaged in their classroom learning experience.

On another level, I thought that if I managed to answer these questions I may be able, consequently, to answer broader questions pertaining to the status of English learning in Libya. When these English-speciality schools were first introduced, the Government stated that aim was to improve the effectiveness of English language education in Libya by offering English speciality at a younger age in order to expand the period in which English major students are formally exposed to English learning. My thinking was, that if I managed to investigate these assumptions through the actual experience of language learners, I may be able to shed some light onto whether these schools actually do they were meant to do. In 2007, I was offered a scholarship by my university to carry out a PhD project, which meant that I was finally able to invest my curiosity and interest in my field into an academic piece of work that would potentially enrich my experience as a language educationalist as well as contribute to the academic efforts to improve English education in Libya.

My interest in the above questions stimulated my interest in the literature on motivation to learn second or foreign languages and instigated my involvement with the relevant L2 motivational theories. My search for what may accommodate my questions in the many

L2 motivational theories and frameworks was guided by my desire to adopt a framework that would not restrict my investigation to particular aspects of L2 motivation but one that could incorporate the socio-cultural and political context of L2 learning in Libya, and one that could particularly acknowledge the future dimension of L2 motivation. My search eventually landed me on Dörnyei's (2005) *L2 Self System* framework of L2 motivation, which I believe is the appropriate approach to address my questions. In fact, my interest in Dörnyei's framework grew even greater when I realized that by adopting this framework I may be able to contribute to the L2 motivation literature by addressing an apparent gap in Dörnyei's framework. This gap appeared to me in the absence of empirical investigation of the relationship between the *L2 learning experience* which constitutes one component of Dörnyei's L2 Self System framework and the other two motivational constructs through which Dörnyei has conceptualized L2 motivation, the *ideal L2 self* and the *ought-to L2 self*. In short, by adopting the L2 Self System, I believed that I would be able to make sense of my experience and underpin it theoretically in addition to the potential contribution to the L2 Self System literature.

After I located my interest in L2 motivational research and formalized my initial research questions, I was left with only one challenge to deal with. This challenge was, indeed, a dilemma regarding whether I follow the steps of the existing research by adopting the dominant quantitative approach to L2 motivational research or remain faithful to my initial interest in the richness of the students' personal stories and experiences, which implied that I had to adopt qualitative methods in order to address these interests. After deliberate thinking, however, I thought that it might be possible to fulfil my initial interests by combining qualitative methods that would help me pursue the depth of the students' learning experiences with quantitative methods that would

help obtain a more general picture of the Libyan context, which would potentially enrich the overall findings and would also place the Libyan context within the existing L2 Self-System research.

## ***Research Aims***

In view of the above, the study hopes to fulfil the following broad aims:

1. To investigate the future goals, aspirations, hopes and expectations that can best describe the students' L2 selves in English-speciality secondary schools in Libya and how the Libyan context differs from other international learning contexts in this regard.
2. To investigate how the micro and macro contexts of the language learning experience in the current context relates to the students' L2 selves. In other words, to investigate whether the L2 Learning experience supports or hinders the students' pursuit of their L2 selves.
3. To examine possible ways by which our understanding of the relationship between the language learning experience and L2 selves may inform pedagogical practices in the study's context in order to create conducive learning environment to support the students' L2 selves.

## ***Organization of the Study***

This study is divided into eight chapters in addition to the current introductory section.

Chapter 1, which follows this introduction, explores the research context. It examines the historical, social and political context of education in Libya in general and the education of foreign languages in particular. The chapter is particularly focused in the second half on *specialized* secondary schools which have recently replaced the *general* secondary schools in Libya and provides more insights about these schools while it describes in detail the school where the current study was conducted.

In Chapter 2, I present the theoretical L2 motivation framework which this study adopts. The chapter provides an overview of the existent history of L2 motivational with an aim to build the case for adopting Dörnyei's (2005) *L2 Self System* approach. The chapter includes an extended discussion of *Possible Selves* (Marhus & Nuruis, 1986) on which Dörnyei's approach is based, with the aim of establishing a robust theoretical basis for an in-depth analysis of the study's empirical data.

Chapter 3 discusses the concept of the *L2 learning experience*. The aim of this chapter is to produce a conceptualization of the *L2 learning experience* before this experience is investigated in relation to the L2 selves in the subsequent chapters. The chapter begins with discussing the L2 learning experience from a micro classroom situated perspective in L2 motivational research in order to identify the classroom motivational factors that will be investigated in relation to the students' L2 selves. The chapter then explores a broader view of L2 learning experience by drawing on second language acquisition (SLA) literature, with particular focus on the situated and context-sensitive perspectives.

Because this study is focused on the L2 learning experience of the individual L2 learner whose L2 learning experience is necessarily situated in his/her micro and macro socio-cultural and historical context, I believe that the integration of the situated perspectives of language learning in SLA research have the potential to capture the concept of the L2 learning experience more effectively.

In Chapter 4, I describe and discuss the methodological design of the study. The chapter begins with discussing the rationale for selecting a mixed-method design for the study, followed by a description of the qualitative methods used to collect data, the rationale for selecting these methods, and the procedures followed in the employment of each method. The variables constituting the quantitative instrument (i.e., the student questionnaire) are described and explained, followed by the data analysis approach and procedures, and the chapter concludes with the ethical considerations.

In Chapter 5, I present, analyze and discuss the quantitative data. This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part presents the correlational analysis of the *macro* motivational variables (such as the career-related motivational variable) with the aim to find out what motivational dispositions may represent the students' L2 selves. I discuss these results through the particularities of the Libyan context in order to make sense of them and relate them to other empirical studies in L2 Self System research. In the second part of the chapter, I present the correlational analysis of the micro classroom-specific motivational variables (such as the teacher-related motivational variable) in regard to the relationship between these variables and the students' L2 selves. By the end of the chapter, the overall findings are hoped to produce a general picture of the motivational

components representing the students' L2 selves and how the motivational factors in their classrooms relate to these selves.

In Chapter 6, I present the qualitative data which are concerned with the learning experience of three key participants. The chapter presents the data for each participant separately before all the data are integrated in the subsequent discussion. Each participant is introduced by describing her socio-cultural background as well as her learning experience background. This chapter is primarily concerned with the representations of each of the three participants' L2 selves which are drawn from multiple sources of data, namely; interviews, classroom observation notes, and learning diaries. The chapter produces a detailed description of the structure of each participant's L2 self system.

In Chapter 7, each key participant's L2 self system that is identified and described in Chapter 6 will be investigated in relation to the participant's L2 learning experience. The chapter is divided into three main themes under which each participant's data are analyzed and discussed. Each theme contains sub-themes describing the intricate dynamic relationship between the participants' L2 selves and the contextual factors characterizing their L2 learning experiences. The chapter concludes with an extended discussion of the main findings identified in the chapter.

Finally, in Chapter 8, I conclude with a summary of the study findings in an integrated way. I will then outline some implications in regard to the L2 Self System literature, the English-speciality schools in Libya, and suggestions for further research.



# **Chapter One**

## **English Education in Libya**

This chapter aims to provide brief background information about the context in which the current study was conducted. The context of the study is entrenched in Libya, a country with a unique socio-political and cultural history which has had a significant role in shaping the development of its educational system. It is important to mention that while I was writing up this thesis, a political change in Libya was simultaneously taking place brought about by the *Arab Spring* which means that the information I am describing in this chapter may significantly change in the very near future.

The discussion in this chapter will be divided into three parts: the first part provides an overview of the status and recent developments of the educational system in Libya; the second part discusses the recent development of EFL teaching and learning in Libya; and the third part provides information about the specialized secondary schools in Libya and describes the school investigated in the current study as an example of English-speciality secondary schools.

### **1.1 The Geographical and Sociolinguistic Landscape of Libya**

Libya is the fourth largest country in Africa, covering a total surface area of 1.7 million km<sup>2</sup>, with a long coastline bordering the Mediterranean for 1800 kilometres. The Sahara desert covers 85% of the area of Libya, which explains why the country's population, which currently stands at 7 million people, is mainly concentrated on the Mediterranean coast with only 12% of the population living in the south of the country.

With respect to the sociolinguistic background, Libya is one of the few countries in which foreign occupation has left little impact on its current sociolinguistic structure. Unlike the French occupation of Tunisia and Algeria, the Italian occupation of Libya between 1911 and 1951 has had minimum impact on the country's current cultural and linguistic heritage. In fact, Libya can be seen as a monoethnic and monolingual nation if we excluded the Berber-speaking minority who represent roughly 10% of the population and speak Berber as their first language and Arabic as their second language. The Berber-speaking communities live in the Nafosa Mountains which extend from the north west to the south west of the country.

## **1.2 An Overview of the Recent Development of Education in Libya**

In the last two decades, the Libyan government has managed to achieve the highest levels of literacy compared with the rest of the African countries. A report issued by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) in 2007 reported that Libya had one of the highest rates of literacy in Africa. These rates can be seen in Table 1.1 which shows that the percentage of school enrolment in 2006 for those who are over 15 years old was 94.5% for males and 78.4% for females. In the same year, as Table 1.2 below shows, 99.7% of males and 98% of females aged between 15 and 24 were enrolled in schools.

Table 1.1: Literacy rates in 2006 for males and females at the age of 15 and older as reported by UIS, 2007

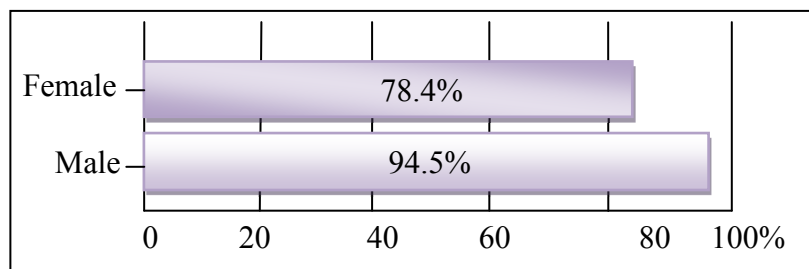
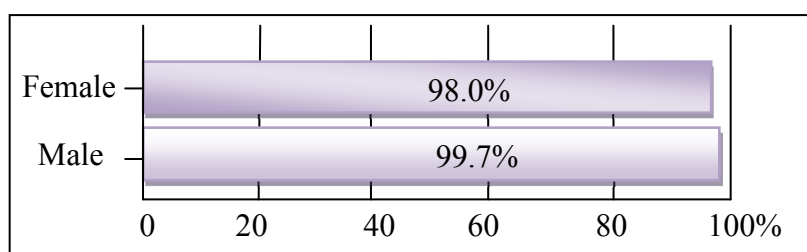


Table 1.2: Literacy rates for males and females at age between 15 – 24 years as reported by UIS 2007

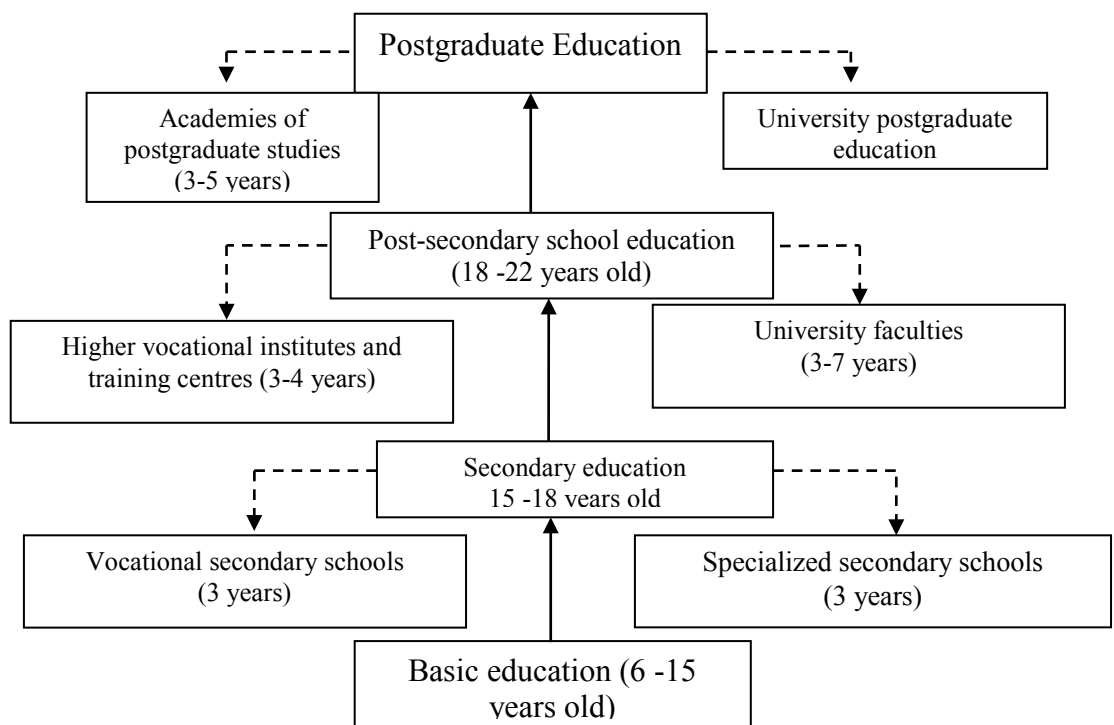


The high figures appear in the above two tables appear to reflect the success of the Libyan government's policy to provide education to as many Libyans as possible after the independence from Italy in 1951. It is important to mention that while there are many similar reports stating the significant achievement of the Libyan government in regard to the provision of education to its citizens, there is little information concerning what the government has done to improve the quality of education over the last few decades. In fact, there is a strong sense of belief among Libyan educationalists that the quality of education in Libya has been suffering from fundamental problems but there has been no official prompts concerning the issue of the quality of education in Libya on a national level.

### 1.2.1 Basic and Secondary Schooling Systems in Libya

Nine years of basic education are compulsory for children in Libya. Basic education starts at the age of six and consists of 6 years of primary school and 3 years of lower secondary school (previously known as *preparatory* school). Pre-schooling or Kindergarten schooling in Libya is not compulsory and it is only available in private nursery schools. Students are awarded a Basic Education Certificate after successful completion of nine years of basic education which allows them to enrol in secondary schools. Diagram 1.1 below shows the expected routes that Libyan students would follow during their schooling life.

Figure 1.1: structure of formal educational system in Libya



After obtaining the basic education certificate, students then may join specialized secondary schools or vocational secondary schools. The vocational schools provide three years of training in areas such as computer sciences, engineering, construction, or carpentry. The specialized schools offer many speciality subjects such as life sciences, physics, arts and languages. On completion of secondary education, students are expected to join university colleges, higher education institutes or higher polytechnic institutes to continue in the same subject they studied in secondary education.

### **1.2.2 The Development of the Secondary Schooling System**

Because this study is concerned with teaching and learning in a secondary school, I will no longer talk about other levels of education and will limit my discussion to the secondary schooling system in Libya. Unlike other levels of education, the secondary schooling system in Libya has indeed seen significant changes and transformation. Between the 1960s and 1987, *General* Secondary Schools were the only kind of secondary schools in Libya. A general secondary school would typically be divided into the *scientific* speciality, which qualifies students for scientific university departments, and the *Art* speciality, which qualifies students for departments of Arts and Humanities at university level. In 1992, the government decided to introduce the *Specialized Secondary Schooling System* which was offered alongside the existing general system. The new system was introduced on a four-year basis, enabling the students to specialize in a particular subject such as medical sciences, physics, chemistry or English, which will determine the students' academic domain at university level, as they are expected to continue with the same subject. According to the policy statement issued in January 1992 by The General Committee of Education and Vocational Training (Ministry of

Education and Vocational Training), this new system was meant to meet the following ends:

- To increase the effectiveness of secondary school learning by directing the effort and resources towards the specific academic domains in which the students want to specialize.
- To provide the students with comprehensive preparation and eligibility to study at the university or in post-secondary school education.
- To meet the regional and local pragmatic and academic needs.

In 1998, the old system of general secondary schooling was entirely replaced by the specialized secondary schooling system, and in 2004 the duration of study was reduced from four to three years. The speciality subjects offered by a particular school depend very much on its capabilities in terms of teaching staff and the regional needs. For example, oil-related speciality is offered only in the middle and eastern regions of the country because the country's oil industry is concentrated in these regions. This means that the students cannot always specialize in their first choice subjects unless if they are able to travel or move to other cities/regions.

### **1.2.3 The Impact of Specialized Schools on the Quality of Education**

As I mentioned above, the aim of bringing about specialized secondary schools to the Libyan education system was to improve the students' learning achievement. However, there has been very little information produced by the government regarding the extent to which these schools have achieved their goals, that is, improving the students' achievement. The only available information in this regard are few small scale studies carried out by MA and PhD students (e.g., Allagh, 2004; Dabia, 2000) especially those

which focused on English-speciality schools. A general finding reported by the studies contended that the majority of students who completed English-specialized secondary school demonstrated higher levels of competence and achieved higher grades in English subjects during their first year in the university learning stage compared with students who came from the old secondary schooling system.

In fact, there are many studies which investigated teaching and learning in specialized secondary schools but these studies have focused mainly on the teachers' teaching practice, focusing on the many challenges facing the teachers in these schools. For example, Mansouri (2006) reported that the introduction of specialized schools in general has led to a sharp rise in the teaching loads of teachers of particular subjects and brought about highly demanding course materials which the teachers struggled to deliver. In another study, Ghanem (2006) highlighted the government's '*teacher Libyalization*' initiative as a major reason behind the teaching problems in these schools. This initiative was implemented by the government in 1992 and aimed to localize the teaching profession by replacing foreign teachers with local teachers in a space of five years. The implementation of this initiative began with opening teacher training centres throughout Libya, making these centres within the reach of all the students in Libya who wanted to become teachers. Ghanem (2006) stated that, although these centres were successful in solving the problem of teacher shortage, the quality of teaching and training provided in the centres was of low standards. This was similarly highlighted by Mansouri (2006), who noted that the training provided in these centres was not designed to meet the teaching demands of the new modernized curriculum taught in the specialized schools. The overall picture of the findings reported by these studies indicate that teachers in specialized schools have not been able to meet the teaching demands of

the current curriculum at these schools because of inadequate teacher training and national policies. Some of these findings were specific to English-speciality schools, which I will talk about in detail after I have provided a review of the teaching and learning of English.

### **1.3 English Education in Libya: History and Current Challenges**

Learning English for Libyan students begins at the age of 11 in the fifth grade where it is taught as a compulsory subject. At the completion of secondary school, Libyan students would have typically studied English for eight years. Until 1998, Libyan students at a university level were only exposed to English during English classes because Libyan universities adopted frameworks developed by Arab experts at The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALESCO), by which all scientific curricula were adapted to be entirely taught using Arabic. In May 1998, the General Committee of Higher Education issued a document addressed to universities stating that tutors of scientific subjects had the choice to integrate English in their teaching. This statement, indeed, came after many calls by university professors and educationalists who argued that Arabic was no longer able to keep pace with the fast evolving terminology in science and technology.

In fact, any discussion of the status of English education in Libya is likely to make very little sense without highlighting the crucial role of politics in shaping the status of English learning in Libya, especially during the four decades when Colonel Gaddafi was running the country. There is a general consensus among English educationalists in Libya that the bitter relationship between Libya and the West which were in its peak in



the 1980s has had a damaging effect on the recent status of EFL education in Libya. Perhaps the most damaging cited issue in this regard concerns the government's decision to suspend the teaching of European languages between 1987 and 1993. This decision came after US fighting jets attacked Tripoli in June 1986 in retaliation for the Libyan government's alleged bombing of a nightclub in Berlin in which many US marines were killed. The suspension lasted six years before English was brought back into the national curriculum in 1993, after Libya's relations with the West began to improve. However, many of the current challenges encountered within English education in Libya are still blamed on this decision.

In a report produced by the *National Conference of General Policies* in Al-Fateh University (Tripoli) in June 2007, the report stated that about 80% of the English teachers who were teaching before the government's suspension of English teaching did not return to the profession after they had been made to find different jobs during the six-year period of suspension. According to the report, the government's effort to solve the problem of teacher shortage which resulted from the six-year gap adopted a quick-fix approach through the establishment of teacher training centres which have failed to replace the quality of the English teaching which the teachers who left the profession had. Another possible reason which makes the government policies unable to bring back the quality of EFL teaching was pinpointed by Ghanem (2006), who argued that the English courses provided in the teacher training centres do not take into consideration the demands of the curricula in English specialized schools. The author attributed the lack of coordination between secondary school education and higher education institutions to the fact that teacher training centres and secondary schools in general are administrated by two different educational ministries; *The General Committee of Higher*

*Education and The General Committee of Basic and Medium Education.* The overall argument presented by these studies suggests that, although the English departments in teacher training centres were created to improve English teaching proficiency in the country, the teachers actually qualify from these centres with insufficient English teaching proficiency, which poses serious challenges for them when they come to deliver the highly demanding curriculum at the specialized English schools.

Another challenge to EFL education in Libya that has often been brought up is the lack of teacher training initiatives, especially when initiatives of educational reform were implemented. When the new curriculum and syllables of English specialized schools were introduced in 1992, many local educational authorities demanded the National Educational Ministry to address the teacher training issue, drawing attention to the fact that the new curriculum posed substantial challenges to the poorly qualified teachers. The Ministry responded by establishing local committees run by the local educational authorities to manage the issue of teacher training. This meant that it was the responsibility of the local authorities to provide qualified tutors who had teacher training knowledge and the relevant experience. To take my own educational local authority in the town of Nalut (where this study is carried out) as an example, the local committee responsible for teacher training initiatives often relied on retired English teachers to deliver training courses to EFL teachers because the resources made available for them did not allow them to hire qualified tutors from other areas leaving them with very little options. After many years, however, this committee became inactive and there was a general sense among its members that these courses could not deliver their intended aims. The committee often blamed this failure on the lack of commitment on the

teachers' part in addition to the fact that the designated tutors had little knowledge about teacher training/education.

A final significant factor that has been found to challenge the improvement of EFL education standards in Libya concerns the lack of teaching motivation among teachers. One factor affecting teacher motivation was identified by Allag (2004) in the lack of financial incentives of the teaching profession in Libya. Although Libya is a country with one of the highest national incomes in Africa, the average salary of state employees is considerably low and can barely support the individual's minimum living needs. The issue of the low salaries was also identified by Mahjobi (2007) in his examination of teacher motivation, but he also highlighted the issue of professional promotion. Mahjobi argues that what undermines teacher motivation in Libya is the fact that schools in Libya do not adopt a hierarchy of teaching positions such as teaching assistant, first teacher, or head teacher, which means that teachers are not likely to be motivated by promotional aspirations. In his study, Mahjobi (2007) concluded by stating that practicing EFL teachers are particularly concerned with the low financial incentives and the lack of professional progress which negatively influence their motivation to improve their teaching when opportunities arise.

### **1.3.1 Attitudes and Motivation to Learn English in Libya**

As for many other international contexts, English in Libya is becoming vitally important in many areas of people's social and professional life. The socio-political change which took place in the late 1990s in Libya has undoubtedly made English learning more meaningful to Libyan people than ever. This change has made access to

the international community increasingly easier as the government's strict censorship on foreign media was loosened, allowing access to satellite TV channels, printed foreign media, and the Internet. This, indeed, is the result of the government's effort to come out from decades of international isolation and reach out to the world. Therefore, Libyan students are nowadays more likely to realize the pragmatic value of learning English than they have ever been before.

Some researchers have indeed attempted to investigate the influence of the recent socio-political change in Libya on the students' EFL learning. For example, Turki (2004) noted that even though secondary school students appeared to endorse the view of English as an international language that is important for travelling abroad, accessing foreign media and technology, they reported low levels of motivation to invest effort in their English learning. In a similar study, Mahjobi (2007) concluded that despite the fact that Libya has recently seen a major socio-cultural and political change that brought the country closer to the international community, Libyan EFL learners do not seem to be motivated by international cultural artefacts such as music, movies and so on. The author, who investigated students in the capital, Tripoli, and two cities in the south of Libya, argued that because the results of the socio-political change have occurred only in Tripoli, students who live and study outside the capital are less likely to be motivated to learn English as a result of the recent socio-political change in Libya.

The above cited studies and others have investigated EFL as a compulsory subject, which is indeed different from the context of this study, where English is studied as a speciality subject. As a matter of fact, I was surprised by the fact that no empirical research has been conducted on learning motivation among students of specialized

English schools. My surprise was based on the fact that English-specialized schools have been around for almost a decade and, more importantly, the introduction of these schools is undoubtedly the most significant transformation of the context in which EFL is taught and learned in Libya. Moreover, these schools have become the starting base from which future EFL professionals in Libya launch their future careers at a very young age. Therefore, I believe that an examination of the students' learning motivation in these schools, and what may influence this motivation, is crucially important if we are actually concerned with the development of EFL in Libya.

#### **1.4 English-Specialized Secondary Schools: the Current School as an Example**

The school selected for this study can be seen as a prototype of specialized English secondary schools in Libya. The school is located in the north west of Libya in a predominantly Berber-speaking region (see Appendix G for pictures of the school). The typical age of the students in this school is between 15 and 18. After successful completion of three years of study, the students are awarded secondary school certificate in English which does not qualify them to work, but grants them access to university-level institutions with English-related specialities. A single academic year in this school is comprised of two terms: autumn (September – January) and spring term (February – June).

### **1.4.1 The Curriculum**

In English specialized schools, English-related subjects cover 60% of the curriculum while the remaining 40% is divided between Arabic literature, Islamic culture, history and sociology. The English course is divided between three textbooks: the *Skills Book*, the *Subject Book*, and the *Work Book*. The *Skills Book* is the core textbook because it is focused on the development of the: *the skill of reading, the skill of speaking, the skill of writing, lab work, the skill of listening and pronunciation*. Each skill represented by a separate lesson but integrated within the same unit with the other skills. Each of these skills is taught by a different teacher, which means that six teachers have to share the teaching of the *Skills Book* (see Appendix C for an example of a complete unit). Grammar materials are represented by the *Work Book* which focuses on the grammar which is taught in conjunction with corresponding materials including the *Skills Book*. Grammar is taught over four 45-minute classes a week, whereas each of the other English subjects is allocated three classes a week. The *Subject Book* provides reading comprehension materials for the students.

### **1.4.2 Assessment: Grade Fever**

The learners in the current school begin their academic year in September and end in June. The academic year is divided into two 14-week terms with a two-week break in January. The students are required to take a monthly exam for each subject and the aggregate of the marks students earn in these monthly exams represents 30% of their annual mark, which is then added to the final examination mark. It is important to mention that although the *Teacher Book* (p. 4) encourages the teachers to use alternative methods of assessment such as projects, portfolios, papers, critical thinking tasks, and

journals, the guidelines for teaching and assessment outlined by the National Office of Measurement and Assessment compels the teachers to adhere to a systematic and extensive schedule of formal assessment based on calculated examination and test marks. What seems to have made the value of exams even more important for the students is the government's success reward policy, implemented during the last decade. According to this policy, students who finish top in secondary schools are awarded scholarships to study abroad; this includes studying undergraduate as well as postgraduate degrees. This has increased the value of earning top grades among the students and has arguably influenced their motivation to work alone and increased competitiveness in their classrooms.

### **1.4.3 Gender Distribution and Class Size**

With respect to gender distribution, it has been reported that English speciality in specialized schools attracts female students more than male students, which seems to be the case in the current school, since only 11 out of 126 students are boys. In fact, this gender domination also applies to the teaching staff because all 18 EFL teachers in the school are female, which appears to echoes the worldwide phenomenon of the feminization of the teaching profession. In regards to the administrative staff, only the Principal and two administration staff are male, while there are 16 female administrative staff. This gender ratio is a typical model of the gender distribution in most of the basic and secondary schools in Libya. Schools are generally administrated by males but rely on female teachers and female staff. The low financial incentives in the teaching profession in Libya, as Mahjobi (2007) argued, have been blamed for driving males away from the profession. The financial burden on males is much greater

than it is on females since it is the husband's responsibility to provide the fundamentals of life such as the house, the car, and the daily life needs whereas the wife's salary is seen as a complementary source of income.

In regard to class size, the number of students in a classroom in Libyan schools is generally determined by the capacity of the classrooms and not specific class size regulations. The capacity of Libyan schools in managing classroom size has undoubtedly been facilitated by the continuous expansion of school buildings and the provision of required educational facilities and equipment during the last two decades, which have considerably alleviated the problem of crowded classrooms. This improvement was clearly evident in the current school, since the maximum number of students in a single classroom is 21 students, which is considered an ideal class size.

#### **1.4.4 Linguistic Landscape and Language Behavioural Rules**

In Berber-speaking regions, language becomes a common a concern for educational officials. This is because the Libyan government has always adopted strict language policies that do not recognize Berber as a minority language and, hence, prohibit its use as a medium of education. At secondary school level, Berber students are expected to be able to effectively communicate in Arabic alongside their home language, which is Berber. Schools are obliged to adhere to the Arabic-only policy and the teachers are required to implement this policy in their classroom by avoiding the use of Berber in any form in the classroom as well as prohibiting their students from speaking Berber. In fact, it is a common practice for teachers to act as 'language police' by not only prohibiting their students from speaking Berber, but sometimes by punishing them when



they speak it. Such practices have been more influenced by embedded ideologies about the use of Berber and Arabic than by mere adherence to governmental policies. This is because Berber has fundamentally been seen as a bad classroom behaviour that undermines the credibility of classrooms as well as the authority of teachers. Therefore, the students' language behaviour often surfaces as a salient problematic issue in Berber-native classrooms, which might turn out to be the case in the current research context.

## **1.5 Summary**

In this chapter I have provided an overview of the recent factors which are believed to have influenced the current status of EFL teaching and learning in Libya. I have particularly focused on the English specialized schools and explained why investigating learning motivation in these schools is worth undertaking. In addition to providing an overview of the history and the structure of education in general and EFL in particular, I have specifically highlighted the socio-political context as a salient factor that has shaped the status of EFL education in Libya. I described how EFL education policies have been orchestrated by Libya's international relationships, which led to a complete six-year suspension of English from the national curriculum in the 1980s and 1990s and which has been blamed for the current low standards of EFL proficiency in Libya. What I have emphasized in this chapter is the need to investigate English specialized schools, because I believe these schools have initiated a major transformation of the status of EFL in Libya. This is not only because these schools provide a unique EFL context that has yet to be investigated but, more importantly, because these schools constitute the foundation on which the future of EFL in Libya is being built, as the students of these schools represent the future generation of EFL teachers, translators and

interpreters, and other English-relevant professions. Therefore, in addition to its original aims, another value of this study is the potential insights that this study may provide about an important dimension of EFL education in Libya.

## **Chapter Two**

### **L2 Motivation and Possible Selves**

The aim of this chapter is to outline the theoretical framework which this study adopts in regard to L2 motivation aiming specifically to explain the rationale behind choosing Dornyei's (2005) *L2 Self System*. As I briefly mentioned in the introduction section of this thesis, I am particularly interested in exploring the context of specialized English schools in regard to the way learners in these schools envisage their future possibilities as L2 users, and how these future possibilities are related to their learning experiences. In order to build the case for my choice of the *L2 Self System* to explore this line of enquiry, I will begin this chapter with reviewing theories of L2 motivation and discuss how research in the field has evolved aiming throughout the discussion to state why the *L2 Self System* is the appropriate framework for this study. In the second half of this chapter, I will discuss L2 Self System in detail, review its theoretical roots in the mainstream motivational psychology, and review the relevant empirical research.

#### **2.1 L2 Motivation Research: From Macro to Micro Perspectives**

##### **2.1.1 The Integrative Period**

Second language motivational research has generated a wealth of literature over the last four decades through which researchers have sought to understand the fundamental question of what motivate students to learn a foreign/second language. This research was founded in 1959 by the Canadian social psychologists Gardner and Lambert (1972) who proposed the notion of *integrative motivation*. Influenced by Canadian Francophone students in Quebec who were learning English as a second language, Gardner and

Lambert proposed that motivation to learn the L2 is predicted by attitudes towards the target language community and towards the learning situation. According to Gardner (1985), the integrative motive is a construct made up of (a) *integrativeness*, which concerns attitudes towards the L2 community; (b) *attitudes towards the learning situation*, which concerns attitudes towards the language teacher and the language course; and (c) *motivation*, which is concerned with intended effort and desire to learn the L2. The integrative orientations are not, indeed, viewed as components of motivation but are antecedents for motivation. According to Gardner (1985), L2 learners who are integratively orientated (i.e., have positive attitudes towards the L2 and L2 community) and tend to evaluate the learning situation positively are likely (but not necessarily) to be motivated to learn a second language and, hence, are more likely to be successful learners of the L2.

It is important to mention that Gardner's approach is often understood through the dichotomous relationship between integrative orientations and *instrumental* orientations, which does not actually reflect the conceptualization of Gardner's socio-educational model of L2 motivation. Instrumental orientation involves the utilitarian value of learning the L2 such as studying to achieve career aspirations. According to Gardner and Tremblay (1994), the view that the L2 learner may be either integratively or instrumentally motivated has never been the intention of the integrative approach. Despite the blurred relationship between the integrative orientation and the instrumental orientation, however, the significance of Gardner's integrativeness approach is evident in the fact that it was adopted by researchers worldwide who have typically employed the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which was developed by Gardner and his colleagues (e.g., Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993a; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995). The

contribution of the integrativeness approach lies in the fact that it has allowed researchers to acknowledge the social dimension of L2 motivation and recognize the L2 learner as a social being whose motivation to learn is necessarily embedded in his/her social context.

### ***Critiques of the Integrative Approach***

Although interest in Gardner's approach has generated ample empirical studies which have validated and supported this approach, this interest has equally generated controversy and a considerable number of reservations. Some researchers have questioned the definition of integrativeness, its significance in classroom-based research, the nature of the relationship between its components (i.e., whether or not the relationship is causal), and the significance of integrativeness in learning contexts where a language is taught as a foreign language (EFL) rather than as a second language (ESL).

To begin with, the concepts and labels adopted by Gardner and his associates were found to be confusing. For instance, Dörnyei (2009) points out that the label 'integrative' is ambiguous because it is not quite clear what the target of the integration is. Prior to that, Dörnyei et al. (2006) pointed out that Gardner's earlier work presented instrumentality as a type of orientation, rather than a motivation, which rules out the concept of instrumental motivation. Another major critique of Gardner's approach concerns the issue of causality. The integrative approach contends that positive attitudes are likely to lead to motivation and learning success, which is challenged by Skehan (1989), who argues that motivation causes success in language learning but is also caused by it. A similar point is raised by Ushioda (2003) who points out that language learning success fuels motivation and not the other way around. These views are based

on other ways of looking at motivational antecedents such as those suggested by attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), which posits that when people attribute success to their ability they are likely to experience pride and increased self-esteem, which leads to an increased motivation.

Perhaps the major challenge to Gardner's integrativeness approach lies in the issue of context, which is summed up by Dörnyei (2009) who states that in many language learning environments the concept of integrativeness simply does not make much sense. In learning contexts where there is little or no contact with the L2 community and L2 is taught as a foreign language rather than a second language, some researchers have argued that instrumental orientations may be what really motivate students to learn the L2, arguing that it is more applicable in contexts where the language is taught as a second language. The salient argument in this regard, however, was brought up by those who questioned the ownership of the English language, arguing that English is increasingly being identified as a language spoken by the international community rather than by the English-speaking nations (e.g., Kaylani, 1996; Lamb, 2004; Yashima, 2002) thus questioning the applicability of the integrativeness approach in EFL contexts. Yashima's (2002) notion of *international posture* has recently been widely adopted by researchers as a result of these views. This notion captures individuals' tendency to connect themselves to the international community, have concerns for international affairs and possess a readiness to interact with people other than those in their home nation. It is important to state that it was not Yashima's intention to replace the integrative motivation concept, but his new conceptualization was meant to seize both integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation and, thus, the international posture

was operationalized, according to Yashima (2009), to include three subcomponents based on reviews of intercultural communication/social psychological research.

The above critiques do not, however, disprove the importance of Gardner's integrativeness framework, because this framework and its relevant research have enriched the understanding of L2 motivation and provided different perspectives on ways in which the social dimension of L2 motivation may operate in different research contexts. In the context of the current study, English is taught as a foreign language and the participants have little contact with either the L2 community or the international community, but this does not by any means suggest that individual learners in this context are not likely to be integratively or internationally orientated to learn English. In fact, since my aim is to find out how the current participants perceive their future possibility as L2 professionals, I will have to take into account these conceptions, but in a broader conceptualization of L2 motivation, a conceptualization which, as Skehan (1989) points out, is not limited to particular motivating influences but one that incorporates a range of possible influences. This is because, as Kruidenier and Clement (1986) point out, different orientations drive people from different cultures, depending on what they value and what language learning is important for.

### **2.1.2 The Education-Friendly Period**

In the early 1990s, a shift from a social-psychological perspective towards a more classroom-based L2 motivation research took place. This shift was in line with the cognitive revolution in mainstream motivational psychology that resulted in the emergence of many theories termed as *cognitive theories* which focused on the patterns

of thinking that shape motivated engagement in learning. In this section, I will discuss some of these theories which I believe bear relevance to this study.

### ***Expectancy-value L2 Research***

In mainstream psychology, Expectancy-Value Theory (Atkinson, 1964) suggests that engagement in achievement-orientated behaviours is a function not only of the motivation for success, but also of the expectancy of success and the incentive value of success. The flip side of this success coin, however, is the failure side. According to this theory, experiences of previous failure in which the individual was ridiculed or punished are likely to make him/her avoid failure by choosing an easier task or a task that does not bring failure, and consequently shame. In L2 motivational research, there has been no complete conceptual framework based on attribution theory, which according to Dörnyei (2001), may be caused by the traditionally quantitative nature of L2 motivational research. According to Dörnyei, the questionnaire-based studies which have traditionally focused on the linear relationship of broad categories have not been adequate to investigate the process of attribution, because the effects of casual attribution are complex, varying as a function of the type of attribution made and the attributional style and biases of the learners. However, an interview-based study conducted by Ushioda (1996) showed that maintaining positive thinking and a belief in personal ability in the face of negative experiences were the result of attributing positive outcomes to personal ability and attributing lack of success to temporary shortcomings that might be overcome. In a similar study, Williams and Burden's (1999) study highlighted the factor of age in relation to the language learners' attributional patterns: listening and concentrating were the reasons to which participants aged 10 to 12 attributed their success, whereas older



participants (13-17) attributed their success to ability, level of work, circumstances, and others' influence. These two studies reflect the adaptive attributional patterns found in educational psychology but they also reflect the significance of attributions in L2 motivation and in shaping learners' learning experience.

### ***Linguistic Self-confidence***

Another important construct marking the cognitive period of L2 motivational research is *linguistic self-confidence* which was introduced and empirically investigated by Richard Clément and his colleagues (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Clement & Kruidenier, 1983; Noels, Pon, & Clement, 1996). Linguistic self-confidence concerns the individual's "self-perceptions of communicative competence and concomitant low levels of anxiety in using the second language" (Noels, Pon, & Clement, 1996). The concept is also described by Clement et al. (1994) as "the most important determinant of attitude and effort expended toward L2 learning". In fact, this concept is parallel to the concept of *self-efficacy theory*, which is concerned with the individual's beliefs about his/her ability to accomplish goals and perform tasks with competence. Although the L2 self-confidence is different from the cognitive construct of *self-efficacy* in that the former is socially defined and determined by the extent of either direct or indirect contact with the L2 community and culture, L2 self-confidence does incorporate a cognitive subcomponent, termed *perceived L2 competence* (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000) and also an affective component termed *L2 use anxiety* (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994).

The significance of linguistic self-confidence remains crucially important in the way learners approach their tasks, even though this importance may play a lesser role when a

learner has negative attitude towards the task. This is what Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) found in an empirical study in which they argued that linguistic self-efficacy only affected the task engagement of students who had positive attitudes toward the task; if learners have a negative attitude towards the task, whether or not they feel they can complete this task may be irrelevant. However, L2 self-confidence is undoubtedly crucial to the study of learning motivation, because the strong prevailing view says that learners who are high in linguistic self-confidence are likely to have strong belief in their ability and engage in their learning tasks in order to complete these tasks successfully, which may not be the case for those with low L2 self-confidence. In fact, Tremblay and Gardner (1995) have stressed the role of self-efficacy as an important antecedent to motivational behaviour in language learning, since it shapes the learner's beliefs that he or she has the capacity to reach a certain level of performance or achievement.

### ***Self-Determination Theory***

The most significant contribution of the *cognitive perspective* in mainstream psychology to L2 motivation researchers is perhaps the contribution of *self-determination theory* (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Central to self determination theory (SDT) is the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which can be seen as parallel to the distinction between autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. STD posits that intrinsic motivation is associated with autonomous motivation in such a way that when people engage an activity because they find it interesting they are doing the activity wholly volitionally (e.g., doing something for fun). In contrast, extrinsic motivation is associated with being controlled and involves individuals acting with a sense of pressure and a sense of *having to* engage in the actions. In L2 motivational research, the two

concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation were extensively investigated by Noels and colleagues (e.g., Noels, 2001a, 2001b; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000). Based on many studies, Noels (2001a) proposed that L2 motivation may be supported to different extents by intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and a third type of motivation identified by Noels and her colleagues as *integrative reasons*, which relate to positive contact with speakers of the L2, and perhaps eventual identification with the L2 speaking community. Noels contended that students' intrinsic motivation is strengthened by perceptions of autonomy, support, and informative feedback from the teacher. She also hypothesized that students who study English because they are forced to would generally be less sensitive to the autonomy supporting/controlling distinction than those who study it out of their own free will.

For the current study, the significance of STD lies in the fact it invites us to explore the ways in which L2 learning in general and the reasons to learn L2 in particular are internalized into the learner's self, and the extent to which this internalization may influence the learner's sense of autonomy and, consequently, influence his/her self-regulated learning behaviour. The importance of this theory and its subsequent empirical research lies also in the fact that it allows us to consider the role of the context of learning in regard to the way L2 learners construct learning autonomy. For example, it draws our attention to the role of the student's sociocultural context since individualism and autonomy may not be equally emphatically cherished in different learning contexts, and it also draws our attention to the micro learning context where the traditional teaching approaches may determine the learner's sense of competence and autonomy (Noels, 2009).

## 2.2 A Process-oriented View of L2 Motivation

One of the recent and important developments in the investigation of L2 motivation is its dynamic and temporal character, that is, the fluctuating evolution of L2 motivation over time (e.g., Dörnyei & Otto, 1998; Ushioda, 2001; Williams & Burden, 1997). The significance of a dynamic and changing view of L2 motivation is particularly seen when researchers examine L2 motivation over a long period of time or at different points of time, or examine how individuals' motivation fluctuates when they are engaged in specific tasks (Dörnyei, 2005), which I believe is very relevant to this study. The most comprehensive and detailed work in this regard is undoubtedly Dörnyei and Otto's (1998) Process Oriented Model of L2 Motivation. The model provides an analytical framework to conceptualize L2 motivation as evolving in stages through a cyclical process consisting of: (a) *pre-actional* stage which is related to 'choice motivation' during which an individual is engaged in the process of forming an intention to act; (b) *actional stage* which is related to 'executive motivation' and refers to the phase when individuals have translated their intention into action; and (c) *post-actional* stage during which learners examine their behaviour in retrospect and evaluate the outcome of their action, possibly forming inferences regarding future similar or related actions. The key tenet of this approach is that each of these three stages of the motivated behavioural process cycle is associated with different motives in such a way that language learning is perceived as undergoing constant reappraisal.

Although Dörnyei and Otto's model is the only fully developed process-orientated model of L2 motivation to date, there are other researchers have emphasized the importance of paying attention to motivational change when investigating learners' L2

motivation in regard to the factors may become salient or the events that may take place at particular points of time during the course of learning (e.g., Ushioda, 2001; Williams and Burden, 1997). Therefore, the importance of viewing L2 motivation from a process perspective for the current study, which is longitudinal in nature, lies in the fact that this perspective brings up the issue of changing conditions and events in the learner's learning situation and how this issue may influence the intensity and the course of the students' motivation, which bears the potential to broaden the understanding of the way the L2 learning situation influences the L2 selves, which is the quest of this study.

### ***Interim Summary***

In the first part of this chapter, I have reviewed important theoretical developments of L2 motivation research which I believe are relevant to the current study. There is no doubt that these theories and constructs do in fact illuminate crucial aspects of motivation and incorporate broad social factors as well as factors that concern motivation 'from within' (Ushioda, 2008). However, although it is vital for any researcher to take this literature into consideration if he/she is interested in investigating what motivates an individual L2 learner, these theories/approaches can only propose a list of concepts, labels and relationships that might restrict the researcher's enquiry to this list. After all, what has influenced this accumulation of theories and concepts is the researchers' strive for different kinds of motivation and orientations other than the integrative one (e.g., Kruidenier & Clement, 1986). Therefore, because my aim of carrying out this study was instigated by the fundamental question of motivation, that is, what motivates the L2 learner, I have become interested in seeking an overarching framework of L2 motivation that allows me to incorporate the existent theoretical concepts, constructs and relationships, and yet allows me to approach my enquiry with

less restrictions and an open perspective. As a result of these considerations, I have decided to adopt Dörnyei's *L2 Self System* and its underlying theoretical conceptualization of Possible Selves (PS) as a working framework of L2 motivation, a decision which I will attempt to justify in the second part of this chapter.

## **2.3 From the Integrative Approach to the L2 Self System**

As I have mentioned above, this study was prompted by my interest in the experience of individual learners of English major students in a rural town in the north west of Libya. It is my speculation, in fact, that even though the social context of learning in this study may be in stark contrast with the contexts investigated in the existing L2 motivational research, the constructs and the concepts I have discussed so far are likely to play an important role in explaining L2 motivation in the current context. I also speculate, however, that these concepts and constructs may reflect only fragmented parts of the whole picture. Therefore, in the second part of this chapter I will discuss Dörnyei's (2005) L2 Self System framework, which I believe has the interpretive capability to integrate the various approaches to L2 motivation successfully and at the same time allows me to consider the individual participants' learning experiences in their unique learning contexts. Before doing so, I would like to discuss the concept of possible selves (PSs) which has informed the conceptualisation of Dörnyei's *L2 Self System* framework in order to deepen the understanding of the theoretical roots of the study's framework.

### 2.3.1 Possible Selves

The concept of possible selves was introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986) to the psychology of personality domain as an analytical framework linking human cognition with motivated behaviour. Possible selves are viewed as the mental representations of individuals' hopes, fears, goals, and threats as well as their ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming (Markus and Nurius, 1986). The conceptualization of the possible selves is, therefore, based on two distinct dimensions of an individual's possible self beliefs: an aspiration to achieve desired future states and a fear of the occurrence of undesired outcomes. It is important that possible selves are not understood as equivalent to future goals, because PSs are broader in their future horizon, incorporating goals as well as dreams, hopes, and fears. Perhaps the most fundamental factor that makes possible selves different from the concept of *goal* lies in the role of future imagery. To clarify this distinction, Markus and Nurius (1986) and Ruvolo and Markus (1992) point out that a possible self involves the self-relevant image that is psychologically experienced and that is a durable aspect of consciousness. This suggests, according to Markus and Nurius (1986) that individuals live and experience their hoped-for selves as real, and it is the experiential dimension which makes imagination such a powerful motivator. Furthermore, Pizzolato (2006) contends that it is the imagery which makes possible selves 'larger' than any combination of goal-related constructs; that is, possible selves are explicitly related to long-term developmental goals involving goal setting, volition, and goal achievement, but are larger than any one or the combination of these constructs. A question arising here is how the concept of possible selves qualifies as a better framework of motivation

than the frameworks which I explained earlier and how this concept is translated into actual behaviour.

### ***The Motivating Role of Possible Selves***

From a motivational point of view, the motivational aspect of possible selves are best seen within Higgins's (1987) *self-discrepancy theory* and particularly within the three concepts of *the actual self* (representing an individuals' beliefs about themselves at a given point in time; the *ideal self* (representing an individuals' beliefs about who they would like to become and how they wish others to see them); and the *ought self* (representing the individual's beliefs that they attribute to others about who they should become). According to Higgins, motivation involves the individuals' desire to reduce the discrepancy between their actual and ideal or ought selves. Despite the fact that Higgins's conceptualization may seem different from that of Markus and Nurius, in both conceptualizations, the self-concept derives from a set of guides constructed from a complex integration of one's hopes, fears, aspirations, obligations, duties and expectations.

The motivating power instigated by a person's desire to reduce the discrepancy between their *ideal self* and their *actual self* has been commonly perceived in motivational literature as superior to the motivating influence of the ought self. Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) explain this conception by stating that the ideal self is not considered a *defensive* function but it is the core mechanism for self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, and is manifested as a personal vision, or an image of what kind of person one wishes to be, what the person hopes to accomplish in life and work. The authors describe the ideal self as a self-generated and socially influenced entity that acts as a repository of internal



representations charged with positive affect and can guide decision-making and the assessment of life situations. On the other hand, the ought self is seen as less motivating than the ideal self, because the self-regulatory focus of the ought self is externally imposed and concerned with satisfying security and safety needs and prevention (Shah, Higgins, & Friedman, 1998).

The distinction between the motivating quality of the ideal self and the ought self was further explained by Higgins (1998) through the distinction he made between the kind of motivation that is *promotion*-focused, which belongs to the ideal self, and the kind of motivation that is *prevention*-focused, which belongs to the ought self. According to Higgins' interpretation of this distinction, individuals with *promotion*-focused motivation are concerned with the pursuit of future goals that are personally valued, through which they seek personal growth and advancement, such as when they seek enduring dream careers. On the other hand, *prevention*-focused motivation is concerned with motivation to *avoid* undesired future outcomes, such as when an individual is seeking a career only because he/she wants to achieve financial security and avoid ending up unemployed, poor or disrespected by others. In fact, it was this distinction upon which Dörnyei (2005) based his argument which contends that the traditional concept of *instrumentality*, which has been originally seen as an externally influenced motivating factor, can be divided into two kinds of motivation: the more internalized instrumental motivation, which corresponds to one's ideal self; and the less internalized or external instrumental motivation, which corresponds more with the ought self. I will come back to this distinction later in this chapter.

Another relevant motivating factor is the *feared self*, which was later added to possible selves literature. The *feared self* was the focus of Carver and his colleagues (1999) who contended that, while the actual self does work to minimize discrepancies between itself and its ought and ideal targets via *approach*, it also works to maximize discrepancies between itself and its feared target via *avoidance*. Carver and his associates concluded that the motivated avoidance of the feared self is concurrent with the motivated approach towards ought and ideal standards, even though the pre-emptive link only exists for actual/ought discrepancies (Carver et al., 1999). The significance of the ought-to self is seen in the conditions when a desired possible self is offset or balanced by a counteracting feared possible self in the same domain which, according to Oyserman and Markus (1990), will have maximal motivational effectiveness. In fact, Oyserman et al. (2006) have shown empirical evidence regarding this relationship by contending that students with desired academic future selves demonstrated more engagement with their classroom activities and were less disruptive, whereas feared possible selves resulted in fewer school absences.

The motivating impact of possible self is not, however, an obvious result of the existence of these selves in one's self system. Higgins (1987) argues that not all individuals are expected to develop an ideal or ought self, and even when these selves exist in one's self-concept they do not necessarily lead to the regulation of one's behaviour. In the same vein, Oyserman et al., (2004) point out that future images of the self that represent hopes and goals are sometimes vague and not connected with action plans, which explains why people often fail to attain their goals. According to the authors, possible self standards that are particularly descriptive and carry detailed information are more strongly associated with self-regulated behaviours than possible selves that are more

abstract and generalized (Oyserman et al., 2004). In the same vein, Ruvolo and Markus (1992) emphasize the importance of the individuals' perceived plausibility of achieving a particular desired future self in regulating their behaviour. This is further explained by Dörnyei (2009), who states that possible selves are only effective insofar as the individual does indeed perceive them as possible and realistic within that person's individual circumstances. It is also argued that in order for a possible self to be active, this self needs to be active in the working self-concept; that is, the self which is active at a particular point in time (Hoyle & Sherrill, 2006). In other words, a given possible self might hardly be activated and, therefore, have little influence on current self-representation behaviour but it also might be chronically activated and highly consequential for current representations of the self and approach toward or avoidance of specific behaviour (Norman & Aron, 2003).

In classroom settings, the motivating role of possible selves seems to be straightforward: if a learner has an academic possible self that is vivid and detailed, perceived as plausible, and active in the working self-concept, then this self is likely to regulate this learner's learning behaviour in order to materialize this desired academic future self and avoid undesired future selves such as the failed or the drop-out self. Perhaps the most influential work on PSs in school learning context is Daphne Oyserman and her colleagues' work (e.g., Oyserman, 2006; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995). This work is marked by its social situatedness, since it was focused on ethnic minority students from low-income and rural social backgrounds who were found to be less able to imagine school-focused possible selves or to sustain their possible selves. Oyserman and her colleagues' argued that this was a result of the fact that these students' possible selves received little support from their immediate socio-cultural environment, because this

environment offered few models of overcoming barriers to success or was rife with stereotypes that were not congruent with school-focused possible selves (Lee & Oyserman, 2009). An important line of enquiry followed by Oyserman and her colleagues was the desire to find out whether, by providing psychological support directed to change aspects of the students' possible selves, the learners' commitment to and engagement in school would be improved. They used a series of small group activities and tasks which provided the students with experiences and skills of creating and detailing more explicit own visions for the future and learning to develop strategies to help attain these visions. The findings suggested that the focus on changing possible selves, by giving the learners the opportunity to see the connections between present and future at their own pace, and through engaging them in activities shared with a group, has allowed the students to see their own competencies and build positive interactional strategies with peers, parents and other adults rather than focusing on problems, deficits and negatives.

### ***Possible Selves as Social Constructs***

In addition to supporting the established motivational influence of possible selves, Oyserman and her colleagues' work has provided compelling evidence that possible selves are *social* constructions. In this regard, Oyserman and Fryberg (2006) contended that when an individual's possible self is based on their own past successes and failures, this self is *social* because "these successes and failures are frequently successes and failures *relative* to the attainments of comparable others" (p. 5). The sensitivity of possible selves to the social context has been found in the sensitivity of possible selves to social feedback from peers, the media, parents, and other adults (Oyserman, Bybee,

Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004). The social influence on possible selves is seen as most effective for adolescent learners because, as Harter (1985) points out, learners at young age are actively engaged in seeking evidence of who they might become in the future through social interactions and the responses of others to their behaviour, as well as from role models and internalized standards.

In addition to the ethnicity and socio-economic factors, which were the focus of Oyserman's work, a variety of other social factors were found to shape the individuals' perception of their future possible selves and, thus, influence how they go about managing their actions, such as gender (Curry, Trew, Turner, & Hunter, 1994), and cultural norms of self construal (Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, & Larsen, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). For example, Markus & Kitayama's (1991) study shows how in Western cultures the self is likely to be construed as an independent, separate and autonomous entity comprising distinct attributes which in turn cause behaviour. In contrast, the authors contended that the construal of the self in many non-Western cultures is likely to place a much greater emphasis on the interconnectedness of selves with other selves, involving the maintenance of good relationships, fulfilment of roles, and accounting for the thoughts, emotions, and behaviours of other people (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In short, the implication of the social nature of PSs suggests that studies such as the current one should pay considerable attention to the social, cultural and historical environment in which learners envision possibilities for their future selves. This will enable researchers to understand the ways in which the social context not only influences the generation of possible selves, but also shapes the development of these selves. The research produced by Oyserman and her colleagues has demonstrated that a change in social context is very likely to influence change in how individuals see their

future selves. This echoes Markus and Nurius' (1986) view, which argues that possible selves are co-owned and are socially contingent and conditioned; whether other people validate, affirm and help realize them, or instead threaten or ignore them is the key to their power.

Before I wrap up with the significance of PSs to the current study I will conclude this review by discussing another characteristic of PSs which I believe bears an important value in regard to the capability of PSs framework to examine human motivation, that is, the dynamic and the multiple nature of possible selves.

### ***Possible Selves as Dynamic and Multifaceted Constructs***

Possible selves have been found to be multifaceted and dynamic, changing in time across different social contexts. Possible selves, as Markus and Nurius (1986) explain, are linked to the dynamic properties of the self-concept: to motivation and to change, both momentary and enduring. According to the authors, the inclusion of a sense of what is possible within the self-concept allows it to become dynamic, because ideas about what is possible for us to be, to think, to feel, or to experience provide a direction and impetus for action, change, and development (Markus and Nurius, 1986). This compels researchers to approach PSs not as static traits but, rather, as dynamic constructs that might change in terms of their direction, strengths and motivational intensity as individuals adjust to and negotiate with a variety of social circumstances and environments (Cantor et al., , 1986).

In addition to being dynamic, an individual's possible self may be envisioned through multiple future representations (or visions), in line with the recent view of self-concept as a multidimensional construct. The traditional view of self-concept as stable, generalized, or average has been replaced, according to Markus and Wurf (1987), with a view of the self-concept as a multifaceted phenomenon, a set or collection of images, schemas, conceptions, prototypes, theories, goals, or tasks. According to the authors, the old view of the self-concept as an undifferentiated structure could not mediate and reflect the diversity of behaviour to which it was supposedly related. This seems to be what Hattie (1992) describes as a *structure and a structure/process* in reference to the self-concept as a multi-faceted set of beliefs that mediate and regulate behaviour in various social settings. In a more elaborate effort, Van Deurzen-Smith (1997) provides a list of self-facets that an individual's self-concept might be reflected through, namely: (a) the social, cultural and public dimensions; (b) the private, personal and psychological dimensions; and, (c) the spiritual, interpretive and ideological self-dimensions. In line with this view, Markus and Nurius (1986) argue that to suggest that there is a single self to which one 'can be true' means to deny the rich network of potential that surrounds individuals and is important in identifying and descriptive of them.

On another level, the multidimensional view of the self-concept implies that there is a *hierarchical* or *priority-based* structure that acts as an organizational mechanism through which one's self system can regulate or influence behaviour. Shavelson and his associates' work (e.g., Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976; Shavelson & Marsh, 1986) was among the first to propose a hierarchical model (Self Description Questionnaire) of the self-concept which enabled empirical testing of its hierarchical structure in academic settings. According to this hierarchal model, as described by Byrne (1996), the general

self-concept is positioned at the apex and more specific domains at the middle of the hierarchy (e.g., the physical self-concept) that are in turn divided into more specific sub-domains at the next level (e.g. physical appearance). Although there has been considerable empirical support for the hierarchy model of self-concept (e.g., Bracken, 1992; March, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988; March, Parker, & Smith, 1983; Rosenberg, Schooler, Schoenbach, & Rosenberg, 1995), the relevant studies were mainly interested in describing the hierarchal structure of individuals' self-concept while little has been said about how such structures relate to particular behaviours of individuals. The value of the hierarchal and complex view remains, however, in the fact that the self-concept cannot be adequately understood without accounting for its multidimensionality, as Delugach et al. (1992) rightly point out. Therefore, since possible selves are conceptualized as the future dimension of the current self-concept, these views lead us to speculate that a possible self may be represented by more than just a simple solitary future self that is static but by one that is dynamic and changing overtime and also one that is complex, with multifaceted desired visions which, in turn, may have the potential to provide deeper understanding of the relationship between motivation and behaviour.

### ***Possible Selves for the Current Study***

The point which I aimed to make through reviewing PS literature is that PSs is an appropriate framework for exploring L2 motivation in this study's context. The reason behind this appropriateness can be summed up in three points: (a) PSs provide a broad interpretive framework based on the self-concept that will potentially allow me to integrate the existent L2 motivational concepts and constructs with the individual learner's views about the motivational force that influences their possible self; (b) The



view of PSs as socially defined constructs shaped by the social context of learning will enable me to account for the macro socio-cultural and socio-political Libyan context as well as the individual learners' experiences as a social being including their past, current and anticipated experiences; (c) The view of PSs constructs as dynamic and changing across time will enable the current longitudinal study to account for the change and the fluctuation that may occur in the participants' L2 motivation as they are engaged with their everyday learning experiences throughout the academic year.

In the remaining part of this chapter, I will draw even more on the rationale of the choice of possible selves as a framework for this study as I next move to discuss the *specific* theoretical framework of this study, that is, Zoltán Dörnyei's (2005) *Motivational L2 Self System*, which has adapted the principles of *possible selves* research to L2 motivational research. In addition to explaining the theoretical grounds and the conceptual constructs of Dörnyei's approach which I will be adopting throughout this study, I will also locate my exact interest in this framework in the light of my research questions and will conclude with a review of the current empirical research which has adopted this framework.

### **2.3.2 The L2 Self System**

As I have just mentioned above, based on the theoretical principles of both Markus and Nurius' (1986) possible selves and Higgins' (1985) *future self-guides* constructs, Dörnyei (2005) introduced his *Motivational L2 Self System* approach to L2 motivational research comprised of three components: the *Ideal L2 Self*, the *Ought-to L2 Self*, and the *L2 Learning Experience*. According to Dörnyei (2009), the reason he sought a new way

to conceptualize L2 motivation is because of the fact that, despite the significant contribution of the early approaches to L2 motivational research since it began in the late 1950s, these approaches have begun to be seen as part of a much larger, more complex conceptualization of L2 motivation. Dörnyei (2005) argues that even though these theories and concepts were consistent in identifying a range of factors that were found to play a decisive role in a learners' motivational disposition, they have not clarified the exact relationship between the key components of motivation and have displayed a variety that did not seem to add up to an obvious big picture. In addition to this, Dörnyei points out that a wave of recent studies have reflected dissatisfaction with the interpretive capacity of Gardner's integrative approach and prompted a need to reframe L2 motivation research within a framework that would embrace the various theories, concepts and constructs that exist in the field of L2 motivation. The premise of this dissatisfaction with the integrative approach is mainly based on the critiques I reviewed in section 2.1.1. In line with these critiques, Dörnyei (2005) argues that despite the fact that the integrativeness variable was consistently found by L2 researchers to correlate with L2 learning achievement, it was also reported that it was not equally efficient to show its superiority as an interpretive framework. This was particularly reported in learning contexts where L2 is taught as a foreign language rather than as a second language, where learners have no or little contact with the L2 community. This appeared to be the case in a series of L2 motivational studies in Hungary led by Dörnyei and his Colleagues (Dörnyei, Csizér, & Németh, 2006; Lamb, 2004; Ushioda, 2006; Warden & Lin, 2000; Yashima, 2000). The authors in these studies measured several L2 motivational orientations and found that the immediate antecedents of *integrativeness* were *attitudes* toward L2 speakers/community and *instrumentality*, which indicated, according to the authors, that the central component in the motivation paradigm was

defined by two very different variables: faceless pragmatic incentives (instrumentality) and personal attitudes toward members of the L2 community. Dörnyei (2009) argues that these studies can be interpreted within the self-concept because the self-account can explain the two antecedents of integrativeness: attitudes toward members of the L2 community and instrumentality. That is, instrumentality can be seen through our idealized image of ourselves, since we naturally want to be professionally successful, and therefore instrumental motives that are related to career enhancement are logically linked to the ideal L2 self. This has prompted Dörnyei (2005) to introduce a new interpretive framework of L2 motivation termed as the *L2 Self System*, which I will discuss in the following sections.

### ***The Ideal L2 Self***

The *ideal L2 self* is undoubtedly the central component of Dörnyei's L2 Self system because it is concerned with L2 learners' hopes and goals to become successful L2 users. As Dörnyei (2005) explains, the ideal L2 self becomes a powerful motivator to learn the L2 if the person we would like to become speaks an L2, because of the desire to reduce the discrepancy between our actual self and our ideal selves. Looking at the ideal L2 self from Gardner's integrative perspective, Dörnyei (2005) explains that the integrative disposition can be conceived as an L2 specific facet of one's ideal self; that is, if one's ideal self is associated with the mastery of an L2, they can be described as having an integrative disposition. Thus, the central theme behind the emergence of the L2 Self System was the equation of the motivational dimension that has traditionally been interpreted as *integrative motivation* with the *ideal L2 self*. However, research on the ideal L2 self, as will be discussed later, has found that the ideal L2 self construct not only equates the integrative motivation but it, rather, encapsulates broader motivational

orientations than integrativeness. With regard to *instrumentality*, Dörnyei (2010) argues that because the ideal L2 self is a cognitive representation of all the incentives associated with L2 mastery, it is naturally also linked to professional competence that often requires knowledge of the L2. This, according to Dörnyei, means that our idealized future images of ourselves can be the professionally successful selves.

A number of recent empirical studies have examined the role of the ideal L2 self in motivation to learn the L2. Some of these studies aimed to test the construct's interpretive ability to explain motivational orientations in comparison to the integrativeness approach. For example, Taguchi, et al., (2009) examined the relationship between integrativeness and the ideal L2 self in Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian learning contexts, and concluded that integrativeness can be 'relabelled' as the *ideal L2 self* because the latter was found to have equal explanatory power for language motivated behaviour in foreign language contexts. In another study, Ryan (2009) tested the capability of the ideal L2 self construct to define L2 learning motivation in the context of Japanese learners. The author contended that an ideal L2 self that has a more direct relationship with motivated behaviour and integrativeness may exist in many contexts, but it does so as part of a broader L2 self-concept. In another study, Yashima (2009) examined the relationship between the notion of *international posture* and ideal L2 self constructs. Yashima defines *international posture* as the tendency to see oneself as connected to the international community, have concerns for international affairs and possess a readiness to interact with people other than those of your native country. Thus, it seizes on both the integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation. Yashima's study sought to understand how international posture and the ideal self relate to the internalization of learning into one's self-concept among Japanese EFL learners. The

author shows how the students were able to expand their L2 selves by creating new images of themselves linked to global concerns, and through the process find meaning in learning English while learning to use the language. Yashima also reported that L2 learners who showed a higher level of international posture tended to endorse strong visions of L2 selves which indicates that international posture is likely to be incorporated within the L2 learners' *ideal* L2 selves.

The ideal L2 self has also been discussed in relation to the concepts of identity and identification. For example, MacIntyre et al. (2009) argue that, given its relevance to intergroup interaction, the L2 self must account for identity processes and a specific contribution of the L2 self system could be to provide a functional structure accounting for the integration of identity processes. This seems to be a legitimate argument, because if we accept the view that the ideal L2 self is fundamentally concerned with L2 competence which involves the adaptation of new social and cultural behaviours and ways of being, then – as Yashima (2009) points out – the L2 self-concept will inevitably incorporate aspects of the social identity. In fact, the role of social, cultural, and national identities has already been examined in terms of how these identities interact with the development of young learners and how learners internalize the value of L2 learning into the ideal L2 self-concept (e.g., Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009; Yashima, 2009). The quantitative nature of these studies, however, influenced these studies to approach the concept of identity in its *national* sense and the cultural norms characterizing these national identities, but not with the individual learner's own social identity which undoubtedly differs from one learner to another. In the current study, I am obviously interested in exploring the Libyan context of EFL learning but I am also interested in how the ideal L2 self is constructed by the individual learner as a person with an

independent identity and unique personal social experience. In this vein, I would like to quote Ushioda (2009) who argues for investigating the individual's identities as distinct and unique identities in order to better explicate the nature of the L2 self-concept in relation to motivated behaviour. The current study's qualitative approach aims to expand the ideal L2 self by the examination of personal experiences which, according to Ushioda, has the potential to explain how long-term personal motivational trajectories (channelled by possible future selves) are shaped by current situated motivational processes and experiences.

### ***The Ought-to L2 Self***

The second component of the L2 Self System is the *ought-to L2 self*, which concerns the attributes that one believes one *ought* to possess as an L2 learner in order to meet expectations, obligations, or responsibilities and to avoid possible negative outcomes (Dörnyei, 2009). In other words, when L2 learners are motivated by ought beliefs we can say that they are motivated by beliefs about the type of persons they believe it is their duty, obligation, or responsibility to become. The ought-to L2 self, then, can be seen as primarily influenced by external influences such as the desire to live up to significant others' expectations to do well and succeed. This seems at first examination to indicate that the ought-to L2 self may bear little representation of the learner's own desires or wishes to learn an L2 and is more concerned with preventing failure and security needs. This understanding, as I will explain later, may not be accurate.

Most of the empirical research that has adopted the L2 Self System seems to examine the role of the ought-to L2 self construct in relation to the construct of *instrumentality*. This research appears to agree on the view that it is only the less internalized aspect of

instrumentality that is associated with ought-to L2 self (Kim, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009). For example, Ryan (2009) found that for Japanese L2 learners, the idealization of the instrumental value of L2 learning was found to be a strong motivator of studying the L2. The author interpreted this by saying that within the Japanese learning context, the instrumental value of English for future professions is crucial and, thus, the learners internalized this value in the form of personal instrumental visions of the kind of person that they would like to become in the future. In a different study, Kim (Kim, 2009, 2010) looked at the relationship between the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self through the examination of the learning experience of two Korean learners of English in Canada. Kim contended that the internalized nature of the utilitarian purpose of learning L2 can be deeply rooted in the L2 experience emphasizing that the ideal L2 self and ought-to L2 self are not in entirely antithetical positions. The author argues his case by highlighting the dynamic nature of the ought-to L2 self pointing out that depending on how far the L2 learners internalises the external influences, they may transform their ought-to L2 self into their ideal L2 self.

The distinction between the ought self and the ideal self which Kim draws on in his study which I have just mentioned above is perhaps the most challenging aspect of understanding the conceptualization of the ought-to L2 self. This difficulty lies in identifying when external influences are actually internalized and become part of one's ideal self. For instance, while it was possible to associate variables identified in Yashima's *international posture* with the idealized L2 self such as *travel, friendship, and knowledge orientation*, Yashima (2009) herself points out that it was not easy to make a distinction between the idealized and utilitarian aspects of learning with a language of such huge ethno-linguistic vitality and cultural capital as English. In fact, Kim (2009)

himself points out that what can be regarded as the typical instantiation of the ideal L2 self can sometimes be understood as that of the ought-to L2 self, or vice versa. This difficulty can also be seen in Csizér and Kormos' (2008) study who could not identify the ought-to L2 self as a separate construct, since the authors reported that the items in their questionnaire supposedly covering the ought-to L2 self dimension loaded onto instrumentality, with some items seemingly belonging to both factors. However, they do acknowledge that it is possible that reformulation of the items in the scale of the ought-to L2 self may result in the emergence of this construct as a separate motivational factor.

This blur distinction between the ought-to L2 self and the ideal L2 self was specifically investigated by Taguchi and his colleagues (2009) who, among other things, examined how the two dimensions of *instrumentality*, that is, the *promotional* and the *preventive* dimensions, were related to the L2 selves. Taguchi and his colleagues reported that the *promotion* dimension of *Instrumentality* (i.e., goals and hopes of becoming professionally and personally successful in the L2) was associated with the ideal L2 self depending on the extent of the learners' internalization of the external instrumental incentives of learning the L2. The authors explain these by arguing that when an individual internalizes an externally influenced future goal (ought self) to the extent where it becomes personally valued, this goal becomes part of the individual's ideal self. The authors also highlighted the role of the socio-cultural and the socio-economic contexts in the process of the internalization of external influences. Taguchi et al., found that studying English for a promotion in China and Iran was positively related the L2 learners' ought-to L2 selves as well as their ideal L2 selves. The authors explained these findings by attributing them to the low salaries in Iran and China and the parents' expectations of their children to bring them honour and prestige by being successful.



These factors, according to the authors, influence the L2 learners in these countries to study hard and gain promotion at work in order to secure a higher salary that would be used to support their family members and live up to their parents expectation. Therefore, even though the pursuit of promotional opportunities may function to support the ideal L2 selves of L2 learners in these countries, these learners' socio-cultural and socio-economic realities suggest that their career aspirations are likely to be influenced by the need to support their ought-to L2 selves.

### ***The L2 Learning Experience***

This third component of the L2 Self System differs from the first two components in that it is not concerned directly with the self-concept. According to Dörnyei (2005), *L2 learning experience* is concerned with the executive motives of learning situations such as the impact of the teacher, the curriculum, the peer group, and the experience of success. The way the *L2 learning experience* is related to the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self, however, is yet to be empirically clarified.

There has been little interest in investigating the L2 Learning Experience component so far on the part of the researchers who have investigated the L2 Self System, which can be attributed to the fact that this component may not be as theoretically appealing for the researchers as the ideal or the ought-to L2 selves. Dörnyei (2009) points out that this component is conceptualized at a different level from the two L2 selves, and future research will hopefully elaborate on the relationship between the L2 learning experience and the other two components of the L2 Self System. However, in order to illuminate this relationship, the concept of *L2 learning experience* requires further unpacking. For

example, there are some question marks as to whether L2 learning experience is limited only to classroom-specific components or whether we should broaden the concept to include out-of-school experiences. Dörnyei (2005) states that learning experience is primarily concerned with the immediate learning environment but he also points out that the learning experience component corresponds to Ushioda's (2001) 'casual dimensions' of L2 motivation, which according to Ushioda derives from the continuum of L2 learning and L2 related past and present experiences to date. This suggests a broader dimension of L2 learning experience that goes beyond the immediate learning environment. Ryan (2008) seems to support the latter view of learning experience when he states that the *learning experience* should be termed the *L2 learning experience* in order to "remove the risk of the narrow classroom-based interpretation of this aspect of the L2 self and allow us to consider the experience of L2 learners in a more comprehensive manner, taking into account learning experience both within and outside the confines of the classroom" (p. 118).

The empirical research on the L2 Self System seems to offer little cues in regard to the conceptualization of the *L2 learning Experience* (a summary of the relevant research appears in Table 2.1, p. 66). Csizer and Kormos's (2009) study is the only study which explicitly includes the *learning experience* component as a variable. In this study, the authors conceptualized the L2 learning experience as classroom learning experience involving the extent to which students like learning English. They did not specifically examine the relationship between the L2 learning experience and the L2 selves but rather examined how the L2 learning experience related to learners' motivated L2 learning behaviour among secondary school and university EFL learners in Hungary. Their findings indicated that positive attitudes to the learning context and the teacher, as

well as motivating activities, tasks, and teaching materials, were able to influence both the learners' L2 selves and, consequently, their enthusiasm to study the L2.

In a different study, Lamb (2009) examined the L2 learning experience of two Indonesian L2 students by examining the relationship between their classroom learning experience, their socio-cultural backgrounds, and their motivation to pursue their L2 selves. Lamb shows how a desired ideal L2 self of one participant as a full English-speaking member of the international community within the Indonesian cosmopolitan community was enhanced by the fact that she had a privileged sociocultural and learning background. This participant had academic parents, studied English in her early childhood in the US, and was attending English courses outside the school. This rich learning experience influenced this participant to construct a strong ideal L2 self which, according to Lamb, was able to override the negative experiences which this participants encountered in her classroom. The other participant in Lamb's study who did not enjoy the same learning experiences developed an ought-to L2 self which encouraged him, according to Lamb, to do well in school assessments, but his restricted experience and set of knowledge practices did not engage his imagination to develop an ideal L2 self. This, according to the author, was partly caused by the fact that this student's teacher did not speak English clearly herself, providing little opportunity for oral practice for the student and denying him the participation needed for the eventual realization of an ideal L2 self. Lamb's study demonstrates how the interplay between the learners' L2 selves which they bring with them to their classrooms and their classroom learning experience impact on these students' motivation to engage in their learning.

Similar to Lamb's study, Kim (2010) shows how two Korean learners' learning engagement in their classrooms was influenced by their visions of their future career possibilities and also how these visions were influenced by their learning experience. Kim's study shows how one participant's more competent peer in a Teaching English to Speakers of other Languages (TESOL) course positively influenced her vision of an ideal competent user of English more than her professional instructor did. Kim's study also shows how another participant's ought-to L2 self was transformed into an ideal L2 self after he developed a strong promotionally-oriented instrumental L2 self while he was in the middle of his English course. This transformation influenced his classroom participation patterns in such a way that he became motivated to develop L2 competence, employing his relationship with his peers to achieve this aim. Kim considers the aspect of *alignment* between the learners' L2 selves and their learning experience as the key to the maintenance of ideal L2 selves. Kim argues that when alignment occurs between the L2 selves and the learning experience, L2 learners will notice the gap between their current L2 proficiency and their desirable L2 proficiency and they may perceive the gap as being able to be resolved by a conscious action of L2 learning.

It seems that the qualitative methods adopted by both Kim (2009) and Lamb's (2009) studies have allowed the authors to illuminate aspects of the interactions between their participants' L2 selves and their learning experience that the other quantitative studies have not discussed. Both studies illuminated links between the learners' classroom learning engagement (i.e., motivated behaviour), perception of future L2 possibilities (i.e., L2 selves) and conditions of everyday learning experience (i.e., L2 learning situation).

To conclude this section, the relationship between the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self on the one hand and the L2 learning experience on the other hand remains intriguing, but in order to investigate this relationship fully we need to arrive at an appropriate conceptualization of the L2 learning experience. There is an apparent need to understand what this experience entails in order to understand how the L2 Self System operates as a full system. Both the qualitative and quantitative studies reviewed above, however, have provided ‘hints’ of what this relationship entails. However, there is a clear need to broaden the scope of the L2 learning experience by engaging different factors that have been found to play important roles in the experience of L2 learning. There is a clear need to integrate into the L2 learning experience the identity and the agency of the individual learner and their unique history and background as well as their experiences within the micro and macro contexts if we really want to capture what shapes a particular learner’s L2 self. This will be the query of the following chapter.

### **2.3.3 Conclusion**

In the second part of this chapter, I have discussed the L2 Self System framework, explored its theoretical background, and provided an up to date review of the relevant empirical research (Table 2.1 below sums up the recent relevant studies). The argument of this chapter can be summed up in two points: a) the L2 Self System and its relevant theoretical principles are the appropriate framework to answer this study’s research questions; and b) there is a clear need to illuminate the relationship between the *L2 learning experience* and the *L2 selves* and this study promises to do so. In the following chapter, I will discuss the concept of *L2 learning experience* both in L2

motivational literature and SLA research in order to define a broad conceptual framework of the *L2 learning experience*, which will enable me to investigate the relationship between this experience and the two constructs of the L2 selves.

Table 2.1: A survey of selected empirical studies grounded in Dörnyei's (2005) Motivational L2 Self System research

Author/s and year	Focus of enquiry (in relation to ideal L2 self & ought-to L2 self)	L2 Learning Experience	Context	Findings
Taguchi, Magid & Rapi (2009)	How <i>ideal</i> and <i>ought-to L2 selves</i> relate to the dimension of <i>instrumentality</i> .	Learning experience is seen within factors related particularly to national context of English learning and the socio-economic norms.	Japanese, Chinese and Iranian learners of English in their native countries.	a) The <i>ideal L2 self-concept</i> possesses increased explanatory power and <i>integrativeness</i> can be relabelled as the <i>ideal L2 self</i> ; b) Instrumentality can be classified into two distinct constructs associated with <i>promotion</i> versus <i>prevention</i> focus.
Csizer and Kormos (2009)	The relationship between the <i>ideal L2 self</i> and <i>ought-to L2 self</i> as an intended L2 effort.	The extent to which students like the experience of learning English.	Secondary school students and university students in a primarily monolingual context in Hungary.	Motivated learning behaviour for secondary school and university students was partly determined by the <i>ideal L2 self</i> The <i>ought-to L2 self</i> could not be ascertained.
Ryan (2009)	Empirical testing of the validity of <i>ideal L2 self</i> in describing <i>L2 motivation</i> .	Learning experience is seen primarily within the Japanese socio-economic and national context of learning English.	Japanese learners of English in Japan.	a) The <i>ideal L2 self</i> has the more direct relationship with motivated behaviour; b) <i>Integrativeness</i> exists as part of a broader <i>L2 self-concept</i> .
Yashima (2009)	How <i>ideal L2 self</i> relates to <i>international posture</i> .	The experience of learning English as a Japanese learner in relation to the international context of learning English.	Japanese EFL learners in Japan.	Learners who showed a higher level of <i>international posture</i> and frequency of willingness to communicate tend to endorse the vision of <i>ideal L2 self</i> more strongly.
Al-Shehri et al. (2009)	How <i>ideal L2 self</i> relates to visual learning styles and imagination.	The experience of Saudi Arabian students learning English in Saudi Arabia and UK in relation to the use of visual aids.	Saudi EFL learners in Saudi Arabia and the UK.	Individuals with a more developed visual/imaginative capacity can develop a more potent <i>ideal L2 self</i> .
Lamb (2009)	The relationship between the <i>ideal L2 self</i> and the <i>ought-to self</i> relate to the <i>micro</i> and <i>macro</i> level of <i>learning experience</i> .	Classroom learning experience; out-of-school learning activities; past learning experience.	Indonesian junior high school students learning EFL in Indonesia.	<i>L2 selves</i> are valuable concepts for describing the way individuals identify with a foreign language, which is much enhanced if we explore their origins in, and impact on, the social settings and situated activity of language learning.
Kim (2009)	Investigating the interrelationship between <i>ideal L2 self</i> and <i>ought-to L2 self</i> and the <i>L2 learning experience</i> .	Classroom learning experience, contact with native speakers out of school.	Two Korean EFL students studying English in Canada	a) Pragmatic orientations of L2 learning can be merged into either the <i>ideal L2 self</i> or the <i>ought-to L2 self</i> , depending on the degree of internalization; b) A positive, competent, and promotion-based future L2 self-image needs to be aligned to the learner's life experiences in a variety of communities.

## **Chapter Three**

### **L2 Learning Experience**

After presenting the theoretical framework which this study adopts in regard to L2 motivation, the aim of this chapter is to propose a conceptualization of the concept of the *L2 learning experience* which is needed in order for this study to investigate the relationship between the *L2 learning situation* and the *L2 self*. I would like here to draw the reader's attention that the term *L2 experience* will be used interchangeably with the term *L2 situation* throughout this thesis. To begin with, I will discuss the concept of L2 learning situation in L2 motivational research by focusing on Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation. However, I will have to go beyond the L2 motivational research to explore how the concept of L2 learning experience is viewed within SLA research with the aim to construct a view of this experience through the integration of different but relevant SLA perspectives. Such integrated view, indeed, is in line with many calls made by L2 motivational scholars who advocated broadening our understanding of what may influence L2 learning motivation. For example, Ushioda (2009) calls for the integration of a range of relevant theoretical SLA frameworks to inform our analysis of interaction processes and relations in language classrooms. In a similar argument, MacIntyre et al. (2009) call for L2 motivational researchers to employ different perspectives with various dimensions of focus through which they can concentrate on different activities in which an L2 learner occupies his or her time. This focus, according to the authors, has the potential to enable researchers to enhance their understanding of the learner by asking about the relative importance of various motives, language-related and otherwise: "this is an area that can and should be explored, and



seems easily approached from a possible selves perspective” (Macintyre, Mackinnon, & Clement, 2009, p. 83). Therefore, the materials presented in this chapter are concerned with constructing a broad conceptualization of the L2 learning situation.

### **3.1 L2 Learning Experience in L2 Motivation: a Classroom-situated Perspective**

Although there have been some attempts to capture the micro motivational components of the L2 classroom, such as those integrated into Gardner’s (1985) Integrative Motivation framework, Dörnyei’s (1994) framework of L2 motivation seems to be the most comprehensive framework to capture the motivational components of the L2 learning situation. Dörnyei’s framework divides the L2 learning situation into three categories:

1. *Teacher-specific motivational components.* These components incorporate three sub-components: *the affiliative drive*, which refers to students' need to do well in school in order to please the teacher; *the teacher's authority type* which concerns whether he or she is autonomy supporting or controlling; and *the teacher's systematic socialization of student motivation* which concerns whether the teacher actively develops and stimulates learners' motivation. The latter sub-component can be channelled by three socialization processes: (a) *modelling* the students' expenditure of effort and orientations of interest in the subject, (b) *Presenting* tasks efficiently by calling the students' attention to the purpose of the activity they are going to do, its potential interest and practical value, and even the strategies that may be useful in achieving the task, thus raising students' interest and meta-cognitive awareness; and (c) *providing*

*feedback* which carries a clear message about the teacher's priorities and is reflected in the students' motivation.

2. *Course-specific motivational components.* These include four major motivational factors to describe L2 classroom motivation: *interest*, *relevance*, *expectancy*, and *satisfaction*. *Interest* is related to intrinsic motivation and the individual's inherent curiosity and desire to know more about him or herself and his or her environment. The second component, *relevance*, refers to the extent to which the student feels that the instruction is connected to important personal needs, values, or goals. Dörnyei associates relevance with instrumentality at a macro level of the learning situation and the extent to which the classroom instruction and course content are seen to be conducive to achieving the goal, that is, to mastering the L2. The third component, *expectancy*, refers to the perceived likelihood of success and is related to the learner's self-confidence and self-efficacy at a general level, whereas at the level of the learning situation it concerns perceived task difficulty, required effort and assistance, and the teacher's presentation of the task. The fourth component, *satisfaction*, concerns the outcome of an activity, referring to the combination of extrinsic rewards such as praise or good marks and to intrinsic rewards such as enjoyment and pride (Dörnyei, 2004);
3. *Group-specific motivational components.* These include four sub-components: *group goal-orientedness*, *group norms and reward system*, *group cohesion*, and *classroom goal structures*. A *group goal* is best regarded as a composite of individual goals to become the end state desired by a majority of the group members. The *group's norms and reward system* concerns extrinsic motives

that specify appropriate behaviours required for efficient learning. *Group cohesion* is the strength of the relationship linking the members to one another and to the group itself. Finally *classroom goal structures* concern whether the class goal is competitive, cooperative, or individualistic. In a cooperative situation, students work in small groups in which members share responsibility for the outcome and are equally rewarded.

As the above descriptive review of Dörnyei's framework shows, the components incorporated in this framework capture and integrate the various classroom factors which have the potential to influence the students' motivation. According to Dörnyei (1996), each of the three motivational components applies its influence independently of the other two but has enough power to invalidate the effects of the motives associated with the other two. Because the examination of these components is beyond the scope of one single study, L2 researchers have examined these components separately.

However, the interest of researchers in the L2 teacher's motivational role has overridden their interest in the other two components. This emphasis on the motivating role of the L2 teacher is perhaps based on the inherent perception of the teacher as the key motivating factor in influencing motivation to learn the L2 in the classroom. One of the very few comprehensive studies which empirically investigated the motivational role of L2 teachers was Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) large scale study on EFL learners in Korea, in which they examined how the instructional practices of L2 teachers and the learning environments they create in the classroom relate to students' L2 motivation and learning engagement. Among the teachers' instructional discourse variables that the authors examined were *signposting*, *stating the purpose of the activity*, *arousing*

*curiosity and attention, scaffolding, promoting autonomy, prompting cooperation and group work, and providing effective praise.* Guilloteaux and Dörnyei reported significant and strong positive correlations between the teacher variables and the student motivational variables, providing powerful evidence that the teacher's motivational practice does matter. The authors reported that even in Korea, where relatively rigid classroom traditions do not lend themselves readily to the use of motivational strategies, the limited motivational practice that was applied by the participating teachers was associated with a significant difference in student motivation.

The important role of the teacher reported in the above study has, indeed, been widely acknowledged by L2 researchers. Noels and her colleagues' (1999) study focused on the teacher's role in autonomy-supporting behaviour in the classroom, and they reported a strong correlation between autonomy supporting teacher behaviour and a high level of intrinsic motivation among Anglophone students registered in a summer French immersion program. Chambers (2001) also highlighted the significance of the teachers' motivating role by stating that the teachers are more important than the methodology, working environment or equipment because the teachers' support, enthusiasm, and positive approach in providing a learning experience that has practical application, vocational value and is enjoyable and fulfilling are key motivational components.

In regard to the *course materials* components, there are hardly any empirical investigations that can be mentioned here in regard to the influence of this factor on L2 motivation. This is despite the consensus that course materials such as the course textbook play an important role in generating, sustaining and enhancing learning

motivation. Chambers (1999) points out that the importance of the textbook comes after the importance of the teacher in shaping learners' attitudes towards the language course. According to Dörnyei (2001) the importance of the language textbook is understandable because of the significant amount of time the students spend working with their textbooks to learn the target language. The overall view suggests that it is reasonable to assume that the L2 learners' attitudes to their language course will have a significant impact on their motivation to learn and their overall attitude to their learning experience.

Similar to the case of the *course materials* factor, we have little knowledge about the ways in which the *group-learner* components are actually linked to learners' motivation to learn the L2 in empirical terms. This is despite the emphasis on the crucial role of learner groups in language education which, according to Dörnyei and Malderez (1999, p. 67), can serve as instruments of behavioural or attitudinal change; they can be a substantial source of motivation to learn the L2, they can serve as an instrument of support and maintenance, and they can directly facilitate L2 learning. Outside the applied linguistics domain, Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1995) argue that group learning provides the context within which the development of student talent is encouraged, and carefully structured cooperative learning ensures that students are cognitively, physically, emotionally, and psychologically actively involved in constructing their own knowledge. Based on such views, Dörnyei (2005) points out that to create a motivating classroom environment, group issues need to be taken into account just as much as more traditional motivational concerns.

Although there has not been much interest in conducting empirical studies on the relationship between the L2 classroom learning experience and the L2 learner's motivation to learn, the existing volume of literature provides useful guidance to those who want to investigate this relationship further. Dörnyei's (1994) framework which I outlined above certainly provides a comprehensive guidance because it captures the main factors that may influence L2 motivation regardless of the context in which learning is taking place. However, as the focus of the current study is on the experience of individual learners whose classroom learning experience is necessarily located in the macro context of their learning, there is a clear need for the micro context to be informed by the macro context of the L2 learning experience which I will discuss in the following sections.

### **3.2 L2 Learning Experience in Situated Perspectives of SLA Research**

When we talk about the L2 learning situation, it makes sense to start with a reflection on the wider debates in SLA research where the focus has been on understanding the situated nature of L2 development. This focus has become prominent after a strong argument for a shift to the wider context of language learning was made by Firth and Wagner (1997). In their paper, Firth and Wagner called L2 researchers to consider the social and contextual factors influencing the experience of L2 learning and reconsider the view of L2 learning as a mere phenomenon of cognitive information processing. Although this call has generated great debate between SLA scholars who supported this shift (e.g., Hall, 1997) and those who insisted that SLA enquiry should remain as an internal mental process (e.g., Long, 1997), this shift has widened the scope of SLA as the researchers began to draw on various research perspectives to present the L2 learning

experience as a primarily contextualized and situated process. SLA researchers began to view this process as one that is shaped by a nested set of factors that may include the learner's socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political background, the learner's identity and agency, and issues of power relations and access to learning opportunities. As a result, the term *situated L2 learning* has become a reference to studies on L2 learning which are grounded in the social and contextual nature of the experience of language learning. Researchers who adopt a situated learning perspective identify their studies with various perspectives and theories such as Vygotsky's sociocultural perspective of learning (e.g., Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), language socialization (e.g., Watson-Gegeo, 2004), complex and ecological perspectives (e.g., Van Lier, 2004), and poststructuralist and critical perspectives (e.g., Norton, 2000; Toohey, 2000). The theoretical premise underlying these frameworks is the argument that learning is mediated and shaped by the relationship between the individual learner and the surrounding environment through the presence of particular factors that function as mediators for the process of learning. Although these perspectives are similar and sometimes overlap in respect to the concepts they use, each one of these perspectives offers a different focus and a different way of analyzing the process of learning. In the following sections, I will review each of these frameworks and discuss its potential contribution to the current study in terms of: (a) understanding how L2 learning situation has been incorporated into alternative SLA research paradigms and, (b) identifying a few points that will potentially inform the conceptualization of the L2 learning experience, which is the aim of this chapter.

### 3.2.1 The Socio-Cultural Perspective

The most influential work in recent decades which has changed how we perceive learning in general is undoubtedly Vygotsky's (1978) work which has redefined learning as a process that unfolds from socio-culturally mediated activities which may involve the presence of the other (e.g., teacher, peers, parents), cultural artefacts (e.g., a book), or semiotic signs (e.g., a language). Researchers in SLA who have adopted Vygotsky's ideas have been particularly influenced by Leon'ev's (1978) Activity Theory which has grown out of Vygotsky's view of learning. Activity Theory (AT) views learning a language as an activity that is goal-directed or purposeful interaction of the learner with language through the use of tools that can be physical or psychological, which results in learning development (Engeström, 1999; Leont'ev, 1981). Activity Theory has been employed in second language research especially through a series of publications led by James Lantolf (Lantolf & Appel, 1994a; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001 ; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). Lantolf's work stresses that *activity* should not to be understood as simply doing things, but rather, something more complex encompassing three levels: a) the *motive* of carrying out the activity; b) the *action* and *goal* of *activity*; and c) the *operations* and the associated *conditions* under which an action is carried out (Lantolf, 2000). Researchers have used this view as an analytical framework to highlight the relationship between learning tasks, the teacher/instructor, and the context in which the activity takes place. For example, in their study of situated learning tasks, Coughlan and Duff (1994) demonstrated how a task of describing identical pictures was conceptualized and interpreted differently by different learners in similar situations. The authors also show how the same task became a 'different entity' as it was interpreted differently by the same learner when repeated over time in a different situation.



Coughlan and Duff's study highlights the role of the context in which individual learners understand and interpret their learning activities. They identified some factors that can influence task engagement such as who is present at the time of the activity, how the learner perceives their relationship with the teacher and peers, and the learners' personal intentions and goals of engaging with the task.

Coughlan and Duff's findings highlight the significance of Vygotsky's ideas in respect to the mediating role of the learning environment in language learning. This significance is explained further by as Zuengler and Miller (2006) who contend that when learners appropriate mediational means, such as language, made available as they interact in socioculturally meaningful activities, these learners gain control over their own mental activity and can begin to function independently. In fact, it is this view which makes the socio-cultural perspectives very relevant to L2 learning motivation; L2 motivation has been seen primarily as a socially-mediated phenomenon and is the result of the constant interaction between the individual and the social learning settings (Ushioda, 2003). Therefore, the socio-cultural view of L2 learning can expand our understanding of L2 learning and the possible ways in which it may influence the L2 self, since the latter is fundamentally mediated and shaped by the environment as well as by engagement in activities that are relevant to these selves.

### **3.2.2 The Language Socialization Perspective**

The *language socialization* (LS) framework is often presented as overlapping with the sociocultural principles of language learning, despite the fact that LS is primarily concerned with the use of language and employs language interactional discourse as a

unit of analysis of learning activities, that is, a focus on sociolinguistic study of ‘speech events’ (Watson-Gegeo & Nielsen, 2003). Language socialization, according to Van Lier (1996), calls for a close investigation of actual talk and interaction to see how the multiple interconnected layers of societal and instructional forces can influence interaction in the classroom and, consequently, influence learning participation. As such, through the analysis of language (in conjunction with other methods) researchers who adopt the language socialization framework have typically investigated the interconnected processes of linguistic and cultural learning in discourse practices, interactional routines, and participation structures and roles.

According to the language socialization paradigm, as explained by Watson-Gegeo (2004), learning activities in which learners regularly interact with others are not only by definition socially organized and embedded in cultural meaning systems but are also inherently political. In line with the situated learning perspectives, the context of learning is a focal aspect of language learning, which refers to the whole set of relationships incorporating macro-levels of institutional, social, political and cultural aspects, and micro-levels involving the immediate context of situation in which a phenomenon is situated (Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1992). In addition to examining classroom discourse, researchers have typically employed interviews, essays, and other data sources. An example of this approach is Duff’s (1995) ethnographic study which, in the wake of political and educational reform in Hungary, explored ways in which instructional discourse in English-medium history classes differed from Hungarian-medium classes and the parallels that existed between micro level discursive changes (or differences) in these lessons and changes taking place countrywide. Duff’s study

provides an example of how a contextualized analysis of classroom discourse practices may provide insight into the processes and problems of juxtaposing existing and new ideologies, languages, and assessment procedures in schools, which may uncover and interpret implicit (if changing) classroom norms and practices rooted in the local academic culture in unique learning contexts.

The potential usefulness of the language socialization perspective for this study, therefore, is that it provides a tool for understanding how learning and the pursuit of personal goals are communicated in the micro context of the participants' interactions in the classroom and how engagement in learning as well as in the social norms of the classroom are shaped by these interactions. Through an examination of the micro context of classroom interactions, we can investigate how the students relate their current L2 learning situation to their future L2 selves through the messages they send and receive about what it is possible for them to achieve in the classroom as well as in the wider environment.

### **3.2.2 The Poststructuralist and Critical Perspectives**

Poststructuralism refers to theoretical approaches that focus on the role of language in the construction of reality and identity with a key concept denoting that meaning is not fixed, but created through social discourses and practice. In SLA research, Norton's (Norton, 2000, 2001) landmark studies were among the first to render language learning through the lenses of identity and power relations, criticizing the traditional communicative methodologies of language learning which "do not actively seek to engage the identities of language learners" or "their sense of who they are and how they

relate to the social world” (Norton, 2000, p.139). Drawing on Bourdieu’s notions of power and domination, Norton reconceptualises L2 learning as a shared responsibility and expands the definition of L2 competence to include claiming “the right to speak” and “the power to impose reception” (p. 8). This focus has brought the L2 learner to the heart of the experience of language learning as the main actor whose sense of agency and self-concept shape his her learning experience.

Much SLA research within the poststructuralist perspective has been influenced by the work of Lave and Wenger (1991) who introduced the concept of *communities of practice*. The contribution of this concept to SLA research is that L2 learning is determined by opportunities and access to learning which are governed by rules of power relations between the learner and the teacher (or other authoritative figures) in particular social, historical and cultural contexts (Morita, 2004; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). The notion of *communities of practice* is concerned with the process by which newcomers (e.g., new apprentices or learners) gradually move towards full participation in a given community’s activity by interacting with more experienced members in that particular community. The view has influenced SLA researchers to investigate how participation patterns and access to L2 learning opportunities impact on the success of the L2 experience. For instance, Norton (2000) adopted this perspective in her study of immigrant learners of English in Canada and demonstrated the intersections between language learning as an *investment*, drawing attention to the complexity of social identities and highlighting the issue of power relations in the real world of L2 learners. A key point that Norton made through this example is that learning communities do not necessarily mean access to opportunities to learn and use English.

Miller's (2004) ethnographic study investigated the experiences of 10 European and Asian immigrants in their transition from an ESL course to a mainstream high school in Australia. Miller highlighted the idea that identity is represented and negotiated through speaking and hearing. After their transition to the mainstream high school, the students were challenged by the fact that the monolingual Australian students were often unwilling to provide sympathetic listening to them, which made it difficult for these students to be audible (the degree to which they sound like, and are legitimated by, users of the dominant discourse). However, Miller (2004) described how the negotiation of identity through language use was different between students and described how an immigrant student from Bosnia learning English in Australia was able to gain easier access to 'audibility' because this student's superior linguistic background (*linguistic capital* as described by Miller) prior to arriving in Australia gave her the agency to be audible.

In another study, Morita (2000) investigated learning experiences of six L2 Japanese learners in Canada. Morita looked at the participation patterns of the learners in classroom interactions and founds that participation for the learners is an emotional struggle to construct a viable sense of self within the contingent nature of students' identities. Furthermore, Morita shows that within the same group of Japanese female graduate students, individual students negotiated their sense of self in significantly different ways and displayed considerable intra-individual differences in how they participated in different classes and developed their academic identities. Similar to the other studies reviewed in this section, Morita's study highlights the importance of access to learning opportunities and the display of power relations that shape the L2 learning

experience, because this access determines the learner's patterns of participation and engagement in learning through which motivation to pursue desired future L2 selves is supported and even generated.

In addition to the focus on issues of access to participation and power relations, the poststructuralist perspective has brought *learner identity* to the heart of SLA research. In fact, the concept of identity has been used in various contexts in SLA research with a greater focus on L2 learners with immigrant and non-native status (Canagarajah, 1999; Duff, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1995). However, the focus on learner identity has drawn researchers' attention to the deep connection between the L2 learning experience and the individual learner's sense of self and who they are, and it has also framed learner identity not as something fixed for life but as something dynamic, negotiated through interactional events and contested in nature (Block, 2007b). From the point of view of motivation, Norton (2000) argues that motivation needs to be understood with reference to the social context as well as learners' multiple and changing identities; the integration of the social and the learner's identity can explain "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 5). The concept of *possibilities for the future* here seems very relevant to the current study because it incorporates the way in which learners relate their present and actual L2 learning experiences to their future L2 selves. In agreement with this view, Ushioda (2009) argues that in order to understand how L2 motivation relates to the experience of L2 learning we need to relate this experience to the learner's self and identity and approach the L2 learner as a person who is necessarily located in

particular cultural and historical contexts. In regards to the interest of this study in the concept of identity and agency, one can argue that it makes even more sense to talk about negotiation of identity and agency in terms of the future rather than the present because the experience of learning is fundamentally future-oriented. In other words, a focus on the learner's negotiation of their identity and agency seems to be even more necessary for the conceptualization of the L2 learning experience if we want to relate this experience to future L2 selves.

### **3.2.3 The Complexity Perspective**

Before I begin my discussion in this section, I would like to emphasize that my interest in the complex view of L2 learning experience is located in its methodological value. As the above discussion suggests, the factors that have been found to influence the experience of L2 learning are many and complicated and, hence, awareness of this complexity is needed in order to avoid shallow interpretations and simple cause-effect format. In this vein, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) point out that the multiple overlapping factors and concepts that have been found to play a role in the L2 learning experience over the last half century are inseparable from the whole complex system of the L2 learning experience. It was Larsen-Freeman (1997) who, in fact, called for a view of SLA as a dynamic, complex and nonlinear system. She argues that instead of investigating single variables, the complex view of language development is necessary because the interconnectedness of SLA variables makes it much more difficult, if not impossible, to isolate independent variables that act in causative ways.

The key word that seems to be shared by those who call for a complex view of language learning experience is *holism*, which describes L2 development as an *emergent* phenomenon from triadic interactions in which the physical, social and symbolic worlds are interconnected. Kramasch and Steffensen (2007) argue that the view of language learning as *holistic* rejects the isolated, self-contained view of language learning and promotes investigating language in its natural surroundings, i.e. in relation to the personal, situational, cultural, and societal factors that collectively shape the production and evolution of language. Of course, this is easier said than done, because to account for the many factors in SLA research in a single study seems an unrealistically ambitious. However, I believe that the potential benefit of the complexity view of language learning research for the current study can be seen in two points. First, it consolidates the approach I have chosen for investigating the current study in which I seek to incorporate the multiple SLA perspectives I have discussed so far (Table 3.1 sums up this discussion on the following page) in regard to their contribution to understanding L2 motivation. Second, the complex view provides a thorough analytical approach of the data, which I will state through the three points made by Brown's (2000): a) the complex view encourages us to avoid dichotomies by looking for complimentary, inclusiveness, and interface relationships; b) it advises us to avoid linear and causal approaches to theorizing and consider the interacting factors for which we cannot assign a single cause; and c) it warns us against overgeneralization, and invites us to pay attention to details; the smallest apparently insignificant factor can turn out to be very important, but on the other hand, beware of reductionism in thinking. By doing this I hope to capture and identify the nature of the relationship between the current learning situation and the participants' L2 selves.



To sum up my discussion of the situated learning perspectives in SLA research, it is important to reiterate that because all the concepts and constructs discussed so far were produced by studies carried out in very different learning contexts from the current study's context, some of these concepts and relationships might not yield great importance in this study or might be interpreted differently. For instance, ethnic identity and power relations as viewed by Norton's studies may not play a major role in the current study. However, I see the usefulness of Norton's perspective in its *dual focus* on language classroom investigation. In their theoretical discussions on *good language learning*, Norton and Toohey (2002) argue that understanding the concept of *language learning* requires a dual focus: focus on attention to social practices in contexts in which individuals learn; and focus on examining the ways in which learners exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in those contexts. By drawing on learner identity and agency, I aim to approach this study's participants as feeling human beings, with distinct personalities, unique histories and backgrounds, unique goals and intentions (Ushioda, 2009) which necessarily form salient parts of their L2 selves. In regard to the rationale of incorporating LS in the current study, I aim to focus on how participants interact and use their multiple language resources, how and when they speak and how they are spoken to. The aim is to examine, in Ushioda's (2009) words, the interaction between their self-reflective intentional agent, and the fluid and complex system of social relations, activities, and experiences in their classroom environment. On the other hand, the complexity approach to language learning is meant to keep the analysis of this study's data away from dichotomies and straightforward cause-effect conclusions and consider the interacting factors for which we cannot assign a single cause, avoid overgeneralization, and pay attention to details.

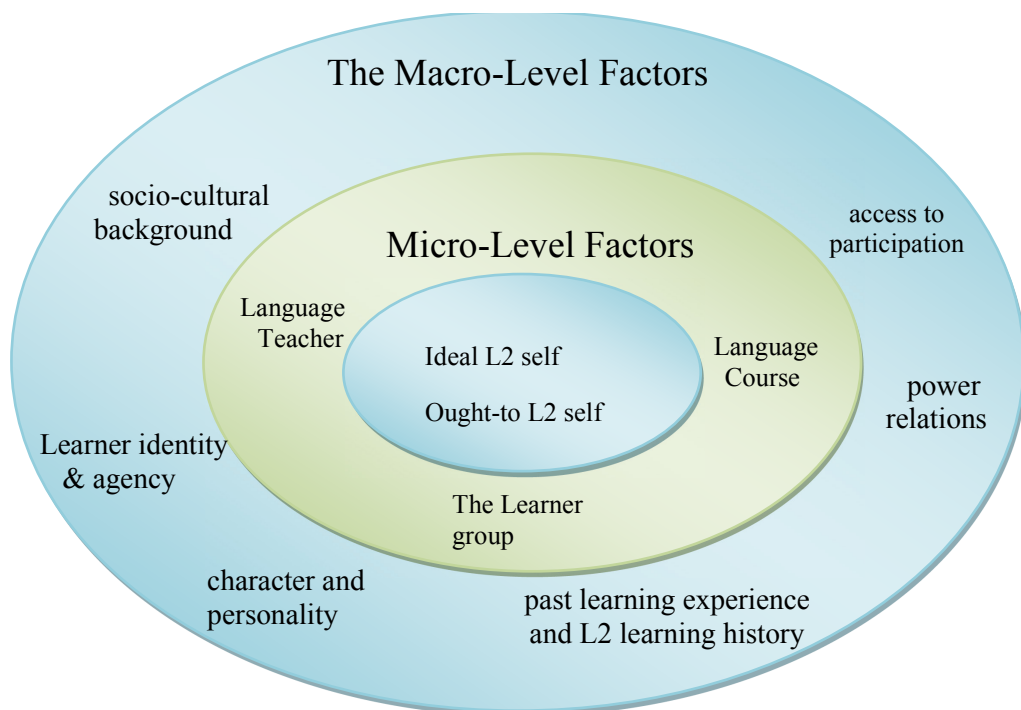
Table 3.1: Summary of situated approaches to SLA research in relation to the current study

Perspective	Approach L2 Learning Situation	Potential Contribution to the Current Study
Socio-Cultural Perspective	The experience of L2 learning is socially-mediated and is the result of the constant interaction between the learner and the social learning settings in a contextually defined environment.	This perspective invites a focus on possible ways by which factors in the participants' micro and macro learning environment mediate motivation to pursue one's L2 self.
Language Socialization Perspective	The L2 learning experience is determined by the actual talk and interaction which reflect the multiple interconnected layers of societal and instructional forces and their influence on interaction in the classroom and, consequently, influence learning participation.	This perspective suggests that the examination of the participants' classroom discourse and their interactional patterns may illuminate dimensions in the relationship between the participants' L2 selves and their learning environment that other data sources may not be able to do.
Poststructuralist and Critical perspectives	The L2 learning experience is determined by rules of access to learning opportunities which, in turn, are influenced by power relationships between the learners and their learning environment.	This perspective invites the current study to focus on the participants' patterns of participation and learning engagement and what might determine these patterns, which requires a focus on how the students perceive their relationship with their significant others as well as rules and laws of participation and learning shaping their classroom learning.
Learner Identity and Agency	Understanding the L2 learning experience is shaped by the social practices in the contexts in which individuals exercise their agency in forming and reforming their identities in those contexts. The L2 learning experience is shaped by the deep connections between learners' socio-ethnic, socio-economic, and socio-cultural identities	Attention to learner identity in the current study is aimed at examining the participants not only as L2 learners but also as people with distinct personal traits and experiences, whose learning experience is necessarily placed in their particular social, cultural and historical contexts.
Complex and Ecological Perspectives	The L2 learning experience cannot be investigated through single variables because the complex system view of language development suggests that the interconnectedness of systems makes it much more difficult, if not impossible, to isolate independent variables that act in causative ways.	This perspective advises the current study to a) avoid dichotomies by looking for complementarity, inclusiveness, and interface relationships; b) avoid linear and causal approaches to theorizing and consider the interacting factors for which we cannot assign a single cause; and c) avoid overgeneralization, and pay attention to details.

### 3.3 Proposing a Conceptual Framework of L2 Learning Experience

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the aim of this chapter was to arrive to a conceptual framework in respect to the L2 Learning Experience construct that will inform the empirical study. This is not to suggest, however, that such a framework will determine the direction of the empirical study but, rather, its aim is to provide broad guidelines for initial research focus. Figure 3.1 below illustrates my vision of the framework which incorporates most of the factors and concepts which I have discussed above.

Figure 3.1: Diagram illustrating conceptual framework of the L2 learning experience



As the above Figure shows, I have placed the L2 learner's ideal and ought-to L2 selves in the central layer of the diagram as these constructs constitute the core of my enquiry.

The second layer reflects my intention to examine the immediate learning situation of the L2 classroom in regard to its possible influence on the ideal and the ought-to L2 selves. The three components; the *L2 teacher*, the *L2 course* and the *learner group* are drawn from Dörnyei's (1994) conceptualization of classroom L2 motivation. As the last layer shows, in order to ensure coverage of the broader aspects of the L2 learning situation, I will consider the theoretical concepts and relationships which I identified in my discussion of the L2 learning experience in SLA research.

It is important to conclude by stating that this conceptualization is an initial vision of the *L2 learning situation* concept and the aim of my investigation will not be only to gain a deeper understanding of how Libyan EFL learners' L2 visions are shaped but also to generate an empirically-grounded understanding of the factors characterizing the current L2 learning situation that are particularly situated in this study's unique context. In the next chapter, I will explain in detail how I will go about achieving these aims by presenting the methodological design of the study.

## ***Chapter Four***

### **Research Methodology**

This study is a longitudinal classroom-based mixed methods study combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The purpose was to investigate the relationship between the L2 learning experience and L2 possible selves. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed to explore the motivational dispositions that represent the participants' L2 selves and examine how these selves were related to their L2 learning situation. In the following discussion, I will describe the study's methodological design and explain the rationale of this design. I will begin with stating the research questions and introducing the research context before I move to describe the data collection methods and the analytical approach, and conclude with some ethical issues.

#### **4.1 Research Questions**

The study is guided by two main questions which I believe reflect my aims and interests which I expressed in the introductory part of this thesis. The two questions are:

1. What are the motivational dispositions and orientations that can best describe the L2 selves of Libyan students in English speciality schools and how do these representations differ from findings reported in other international learning contexts?
2. In what way do the micro and macro contexts of L2 learning situations relate to the participants' L2 selves? In other words, does the L2 learning experience support or hinder the L2 selves of the study's participants?

To relate these two questions to the wider context, it is aimed that these two questions will produce some findings and conclusions that may inform the classroom practice of language teachers in the current context leading to the creation of learning environments conducive to supporting the students' motivation to pursue their L2 Selves.

## **4.2 The Context of the Study**

As I described in Chapter one, the current study was conducted in an EFL learning context in the north west of Libya in which all the participants were secondary school learners who learn English as a speciality subject. I also mentioned that this school is considered as a typical example of English-specialized schools which were introduced into the Libyan secondary schooling system in order to improve the status of EFL education in Libya in the late 1990s. The school is located in the town of Nalut in the Berber-speaking region in the north west of Libya. All the students in the school spoke Berber as their first language and Arabic as their second language while they were learning English as the target language. The context of the study is, therefore, characterized by two factors: the first factor concerns the fact that the study was carried out in a unique sociolinguistic and sociocultural context in Libya whereas the second factor concerns the fact that this study's participants are English major students whose learning context is likely to be different from EFL context where English is taught as a compulsory subject.

### **4.3 The Design of the Study: Mixed-Method Design**

In order to answer the research questions listed above, the study combines a quantitative method (student questionnaire) and qualitative methods (interviews, classroom observation, and student diaries). The study is qualitative-dominant because of the nature of its aims, which seek in-depth understanding of the individual learner's L2 self and his/her personal learning experiences. In other words, the choice of the qualitative method is inspired by the belief that in order to achieve better understanding of the relationship between the individual learners' L2 selves and the complex nature of their L2 learning situation, qualitative methods are believed to offer a more appropriate approach to elucidate this relationship. On the other hand, the quantitative method is employed to produce statistical data able to generate a broad picture of the characteristics of the Libyan students' L2 selves in the context of English-speciality schools and compare these characteristics with those in other international contexts. Furthermore, the employment of both the quantitative and the qualitative approaches is used in the hopes of deepening my understanding of the L2 self, as the findings from both types of methods will be integrated at the data analysis stage.

It is important to state that the design which I briefly described above is primarily influenced by the study's research questions and not by my commitment to particular philosophical beliefs about research paradigms. This design can rather be described as a 'paradigm of choice' (Patton, 1990) or a 'pragmatic approach' to research (Creswell, 2003) which rejects methodological orthodoxy in favour of methodological appropriateness as the primary criterion for methodological decisions. Therefore, my understanding of the problem and the purpose of this study requires me to seek the

breadth as well as the depth of research problem. This, however, will require a careful selection of complementary strategies and ways to incorporate the questionnaire data into the data obtained from the main qualitative methods. In this study, the integration of the methods appears only in the data analysis stage. The process by which I integrated the results from both sets of data can be described by two process of mixing data outlined by Greene's et al., (1989): a) Integration for *enhancement* of results obtained from the qualitative data by using supporting results obtained from the quantitative data; and b) integration for *complementarity* by using results obtained from the qualitative methods to clarify results that seemed to be challenging to explain by using results obtained from the quantitative method.

## **4.4 The Qualitative Study**

### **4.4.1 Ethnographic Approach**

Because an in-depth understanding of the L2 learning context is at the heart of this study, I opted for an ethnographic approach, which is primarily concerned with the social and the cultural context of learning and provides analytical description or reconstruction of participants' symbolic meanings and patterns of social interactions (Merriam, 1988). In the previous chapter, in line with the complexity metaphor, I identified the need for a multi-layered approach to classroom data collection, which I believe can be achieved by adopting an ethnographic approach, as the two approaches advocate a focus on multiple contextual factors and the use of multiple data collection methods. Holistic approaches to data collection and interpretation are the quintessential characteristic of ethnographic studies, which strive to understand social situations and systems of action as sets of interrelated activities engaged in by the actors in these



situations (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991). This holistic understanding is characterized, as Mackey and Gass (2005) contend, by having the potential for rich contextualization that can shed light on the complexities of the second language learning process.

Ethnography is commonly seen as a loose observation of the participants' daily interactions and events. This is because the research methodology adopted in ethnographic study usually focus on an entire range of social interaction and engagement within a particular setting where a variety of research methods are used to interpret and understand what occurs (Pole & Morrison, 2003). In the case of the current study, the data collection was focused on observing and documenting individual learners' learning experience inside and outside the classroom, their patterns of engagement and interactions, how I perceived them and how they perceived themselves. The focus was also on their learning environment; the role of their teachers, peers, and school officials, their school rules and norms of learning in relation to the wider sociocultural, socioeconomic and socio-political world that their learning was happening. Malin (2003) describes this process as striving to establish an interpretation of a particular reality, by extracting meaning from detailed and careful observation and analysis of ordinary complex and interactive situations.

As a matter of fact, I had a discussion with my supervisor regarding the question of whether or not this study can be described as ethnographic. I have come to a conclusion that it is, because although my central interest is located in the participants' possible selves, my motives to carry out this study emerged from my interest in the micro and macro contexts of learning in the current learning environment wondering whether these contexts support or hinder the students' possible L2 selves. The adoption of multiple

methods to capture the relationship between the L2 selves and the L2 learning experience in complex situated micro and macro contexts suggest that this study belongs to ethnography.

#### **4.4.2 Recruiting Participants for the Study**

Having decided to focus my research on the learning experience of individual learners, the sampling procedures of the current study were similar to those of the case study approach. One important decision to make concerned the number of the key participants that I wanted to investigate over an academic year. This was an important decision because I was aware, in line with Stake's (Stake, 1995) argument, that deciding on the number of the key participants offers the opportunity to maximize what can be learned in the period of time available for the study. Although Yin (2003) suggests that observing a single participant "can represent a significant contribution to knowledge and theory building" (p. 40), he also warns that relying on one participant may be unpredictable and poses chances of misrepresentation and the danger of the individual quitting the study. Taking these considerations into account, I decided to begin with an initial target of six participants while keeping the option of adding or reducing the number in later stages.

The next sampling issue to consider was the representativeness of the selected participants and how to relate the sampling procedure to the theoretical focus of the study. For this purpose, I adopted purposive sampling techniques which involve the selection of individuals who happened to be available and willing to participate and have things to say relevant to the research aim and focus. Combining convenience and

purposive sampling strategies, the sampling criteria were based on the following characteristics:

- a) *Willing and volunteering participants*. This was the main criterion to select the study's participants. The learners were all asked if they wanted to participate in the study after informing them about the nature and the aim of the study. The volunteering students were, then, closely examined in order to select cases with maximum variation depending on the following criteria:
- b) *Learners with active/distinct learning behaviour*. Based on the initial classroom observation, active and voluntarily participation in the classroom activities was one selection criterion. However, I also considered students who showed little participation in their classes because lack of participation reflects a state of motivation just like active participation does.
- c) *Gender*. Based on the earlier discussion on the role of gender in possible selves, diversity in gender was considered as a selection criterion in order to examine the role of gender in shaping L2 selves in the Libyan context.
- d) *Past learning experiences and socio-cultural background*. Diverse and distinct past learning experiences, and distinct social background were also considered as sampling criteria because of the aim of finding out the role of past experiences and social background in shaping the participants' possible selves.
- e) *Learning goals, hopes and future selves*. Distinct learners in regard to learning goals and motivational orientations were crucial selection criteria because the existence of future L2 selves was a prerequisite to initiate the investigation of the development of these selves, which is the main aim of the current study.

During the initial classroom observation I selected nine candidates based on their willingness to participate in the study and on the criteria listed above. After I conducted one interview with each of the nine students in which I asked questions about the reasons they decided to learn English as a major subject and explored their future goals and hopes, their personal experiences and background, and their attitudes towards their learning situation, I selected five cases (four girls and one boy). This exclusion of four candidates was strictly based on the fact that they could not articulate any future goals, hopes, or aspirations (i.e., possible L2 selves). Two participants out of the final five (the only boy and one girl), however, did not continue with the study after they asked me if they could withdraw having had attended two interviews each. The remaining three participants continued to complete the study. Table 4.1 below shows details of the final three participants and the sources of the data obtained from each one, which will be discussed in detail in the following sections. A detailed account of each of the three participants' backgrounds will be provided in the opening part of the subsequent chapter.

Table 4.1: details of data obtained from the key study participants

Participant Name	Year of study	Number of observed classes	Date of observation	Number of Interviews	Date Of Interviews	Number of obtained diaries
Hajer	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	16 (12 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> class 10/9/09 Last class 21/12/09	8 (6 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> int. 16/9/09 Last int.14/5/10	8
Nada	3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	16 (12 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> class 10/9/09 Last class 21/12/09	10 (5.5 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> int. 15/9/09 Last int.14/5/10	7
Malak	1 <sup>st</sup> Year	14 (10.5 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> session 14/9/09 Last class 22/12/09	8 (6.5 hrs)	1 <sup>st</sup> int. 1/10/09 Last int. 16/5/10	9

### **4.4.3 Qualitative Data Collection Methods**

The adoption of three qualitative methods in this study (classroom observation, interviews, and student diaries) was not driven by the view that ‘the more data the better’ but, the logic of this decision was based on the premise, in Patton’s (1990) words, that no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival explanations, because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality while multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill (Patton, 1990). Because the three qualitative data collection methods adopted by the current study collectively seek to understand how the L2 learning situation shapes the participants’ L2 selves, a triangulation of three methods is expected to arrive at a structural corroboration (Eisner, 1979) which is a process of gathering data or information and using it to “establish links that eventually create a whole that is supported by the bits of evidence that constitute it” (p. 215). This does not mean, however, that I expect that the data generated by these different methods to come together and produce “some nicely integrated whole” (Patton, p. 330) but, rather, the point of integrating multiple methods is to make sense of agreements as well as differences. In the following sections, I will introduce and explain each qualitative method in regard to its rationale and organization.

#### ***Ethnographic Classroom Observation***

Classroom observation has been seen as a typical research method for ethnographic classroom research because a fundamental requirement of ethnographic research involves a commitment to get close to the subject being observed in its natural and contextual settings. Observing classes, according to Chaudron (1988), provides the opportunity to analyze measures of interactions and learning opportunities arising from

the classroom behaviour and point to contexts and processes of aspects of learning such as participation and interactional activities that influence language development. Particular to the studies which aim to examine how motives, attitudes, beliefs, and values direct human activity, the most sophisticated instrumentation researchers possess, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), is the careful observer who can watch, see, listen, question, probe, and finally analyze and organize his/her direct experience.

In second language classroom research, readily available observation coding schemes with pre-determined categories have been developed by researchers to address a wide range of aspects of teaching and learning in second language classrooms (Allen, Fröhlich, & Spada, 1984; Nunan, 1989; Ullman & Geva, 1983). These coding schemes are theoretically driven and contrasted in terms of their focus on descriptions of various aspects of classroom behaviour. For instance, the Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT) observation scheme (Spada & Fröhlich, 1995) includes categories describing differences in the communicative orientation of language teaching to determine whether and how these orientations contribute to differences in L2 learning outcomes.

Because the current study aims to arrive at its findings guided by the ethnographic approach and grounded in the emergent data, the adoption of a structured classroom observation scheme is thought to violate, to use Van Lier's (1988) words, the two basic requirements of ethnography: the emic and the holistic principles. However, while recognizing the importance of adhering to the ethnographic principles of classroom observation, I have, indeed, drawn on some recent classroom observational structures which seemed to be comprehensive in their observation focus both in L2 motivational

research (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) and in mainstream classroom research (Turner et al., 2002). On another level, During the observation, I was a non-participant observer; no attempts were made to influence particular behaviours or manipulate situations, bearing in mind that the true data should emerge from the natural interactions and events occurring in the class. The aim of this observation was to gain a deeper understanding of what characterizes the participants' classroom learning situation. To this end, I focused on the teacher's instructional behaviour, the learner group and the course materials (in line with Dörnyei's framework which I described in the previous chapter) but I also opened up my enquiry to include broader structures of learning participation (in line with other situated theoretical frameworks reviewed in 3.1). To further illustrate my approach to classroom observation, Table 4.2 shows the way I outlined the study's classroom observation plan. As the Table shows, there are no well-defined features to be observed but the features are loosely described in terms of 'events', 'activities', and 'happenings'.

Table 4.2: Overarching structure of the classroom observation guide

<b>Participant name/class</b>	
Structures of learning, teaching, and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What is happening here; what is the participant doing; what kind of event or activity is the participant engaged in? what is the purpose or objective? what resources are used? how is the activity allocated and organized? who else is involved and how? and what is the social context of this activity? where is the participant located; what physical and environment settings form the context?</li> <li>b) What is the participant saying, when, to whom and in what manner or context; what is the content of the participant's speech; who holds the floor of talk and what are the turn-taking patterns, and what language does she use?</li> <li>c) How does the participant respond to classroom rules of participation and engagement and what determines the rules; what behaviours are repetitive and which irregular?</li> <li>d) How does the participant engage with her peers; what is the nature of this interaction and engagement; and what is the status of the participant in these activities?</li> <li>e) What determines learning competence in the classroom; to what extent does the participant demonstrate learning competence?</li> </ul>
Teacher-related data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What does the teacher do? For what purpose and what aim?</li> <li>b) What does the teacher say and how does that relate to what happens in the class?</li> <li>c) What do the teacher's actions and talk emphasize?</li> <li>d) What seems to be systematic and frequent in the teacher's behaviour?</li> <li>e) How does the teacher communicate with the students; in what language, and in what manner?</li> <li>f) How does the teacher respond to the students' talk, and how the students respond in return?</li> </ul>
Course materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What resources do teachers and students use?</li> <li>b) What extra curricula do teachers and students use?</li> <li>c) What activities and tasks are carried out in the class?</li> <li>d) What are the rules of assessment and evaluation?</li> </ul>
Group work structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) How often do students work together?</li> <li>b) How does the teacher instruct group/peer work?</li> <li>c) What are the classroom rules of student-student interactions?</li> <li>d) What are the general norms of group work?</li> </ul>

## ***Classroom Observation Procedures***

Before I discuss the specific observation procedures, it may be useful to set the scene for the ethnographic observation with a brief reminder of the structure of the syllabus and curriculum adopted by the current school which I have described in Chapter one. As for all the English-specialized secondary schools in Libya, students in the current school



attend four classes of different English subjects a day in addition to two non-English subjects. Six teachers taught different English subjects presented in the *Skills Book* in addition to the grammar teacher who taught the Work book.

At the beginning of the study, I initially obtained permission from the school and the local educational authority to observe the classrooms. It was the school Principal who asked the teachers on my behalf to allow me to observe their classrooms and only one teacher out of 18 English teachers expressed reservations about being observed. The observation began during the first week of my arrival at the school (7th –14th September 2009) with an extensive schedule of observation which covered all the six classrooms in the school. As the study became focused only on three participants, the observation was consequently limited to only two classes, as two of the three participants were placed in the same classroom.

Each of the three participants had an audio recording device attached to her during the observed classes. As a non-participant observer, I always stationed myself at the back of the classroom after I made sure that my audio recording devices were in place and running. My involvement was limited to my physical presence while I was writing notes as unobtrusively as possible in order to minimize the impact of my presence on learning in the classrooms. Realizing this was a difficult task, I tried during the observation to keep my attention reasonably distributed between the key participants' behaviour, the teaching and learning activity, and the general context of the classroom. My focus, however, was becoming narrower as I was simultaneously engaged in transcribing and analysing the different pieces of data, which consequently led me to narrow my focus on particular aspects of the classroom.

Table 4.3 below shows the total number of the observed classes and the subject matter of the class for each of the three participants:

Table 4.3: the number of observed classes for each participant

Participant Name	Total Number of observed classes	of which grammar Classes	of which Reading classes	of which Conversation Classes	of which Listening Comprehension classes	Of which Writing classes	of which Pronunciation Classes
Hajer & Nada	32	14	8	4	3	2	1
Malak	26	12	4	3	2	2	0
Total	58	26	12	7	5	4	1

In addition to the recorded classroom interactions, the classroom observation data included taking *field notes* as a supplementary data collection method. Field notes have been seen as productions and recordings of the researchers' noticing with the intent of describing the research participants' local rationalities and actions (Creese et al., 2008). In classroom ethnographic research, field notes have exceptional importance because of their role as a useful complementary data source to observation data, providing portraits of the participants, the physical settings, particular ongoing descriptions of events and personal reflection and reaction (Creswell, 2008). Furthermore, when combined with audio recordings, field notes are considered essential for quality ethnographic studies because they provide a context for the recorded data (Patton, 1990) and provide information about how, when, and where things are said, who was present, and what activities occurred. In the current study, after each day of fieldwork, I classified the notes according to their targeted units of analysis:

- a) Notes categorized as *student participant notes* in which notes about each participant's observed classroom behaviour were kept in a

separate file and were typically jotted down during observing her during their classes, during the interview or immediately afterwards.

- b) Notes categorized as *teacher notes* which typically included notes about individual teachers' instructional practice and their general classroom behaviour.
- c) Notes categorized as *reflective* which typically included my reflections, feelings and interpretations.

These notes were then integrated with the interview data and the recordings as well as the diaries, through which I was able to provide a more comprehensive picture of particular themes I concentrated on in my analysis. This took place after these notes were subjected to qualitative coding (see appendix E for a sample of refined field notes for one class observation). Indeed, I found the initial analytical notes or, as Erickson (1990) terms them, 'analytic vignettes', the most useful guide in making sense of the observed phenomena because these notes tend to capture the substantive focus and intent of the observations.

### ***Ethnographic Interviews***

In studies where the researcher seeks to obtain the individual's perspective on events and experiences in relation to the context in which these events occur, interviews are perhaps the most common of all qualitative research methods. Ethnographic interviews are commonly associated with terms such as *informal interviews*, *conversational interviews*, *in-depth interviews*, or *non-standardized interviews*. This is because all these kinds of interviewing share the same principles of seeking to understand the complex behaviour of people without imposing any *a priori* categorization, which might limit the field of inquiry (Punch, 1998), and they all aim to access people's experiences and their inner

perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality. In mixed method research designs, ethnographic interviews are seen as natural extension of observation data because they so often occur as part of ongoing fieldwork methods (Patton, 2002).

An ethnographic interview often begins with an open-ended ‘grand tour’ question and subsequent questions are then framed around the interviewee’s responses or informed by other combined sources of data such as data gathered from observations. The premise is to obtain in-depth information and insights into the participant’s self, lived experiences, values and decisions, and knowledge from their own perspectives (Jognson, 2002). For the current study, the aim was to utilize the advantages of the ethnographic interviewing method to obtain rich and in-depth data from the participants’ perspectives which was crucial to support the study’s intention to zoom into the personal experience and stories of learning and motivated learning in a unique learning environment.

In the case of the current study, there was a need to approach the first interview with specific questions with an aim to explore the participants’ perceptions of their future as L2 users, which revolved around the theme of future imagination. Although this seems to be breaking the ethnographic rule, the fact that I conducted successive interviews with each participant allowed the following interviews to be grounded in the emergent stories and events which were not necessary influenced by the agenda I focused on during the first interviews with the participants. Table 4.4 below shows the guiding questions that I followed in the initial interview with each participant, which can be described as semi-structured interviews. For the subsequent interviews I adopted what can be defined as planned discussions as opposed to casual conversation. In these interviews, I often initiated the interview with focused questions or comments, but they were not confined

by these questions, so that issues which seemed relevant to the participants could be explored.

The interviews with students took place throughout the first academic semester (September – December 2009) and one final interview took with each participant near the end of the second semester (May 2010). All the interviews took place at the end of their school day and each interview lasted between 25 and 50 minutes. All the interviews were conducted in the Berber language, as the participants preferred to use Berber over Arabic since the former was their native language as well as mine. All the interviews were audio-recorded but only the significant extracts were then translated and transcribed.

Table 4.4: guiding questions and prompts used in student participant interviews

Ideal L2 selves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Do you imagine yourself as a user of English in the future?</b> Can you describe this self? What are the language skills this self has?</li> <li>• <b>What is the most desired situation in which you imagine yourself speaking English?</b></li> <li>• <b>In what context: place, time, with whom, etc?</b></li> <li>• <b>How does this image (if any) make you feel?</b> What does it mean to you to achieve this image? How sure are you that you will get there?</li> <li>• <b>How would you know that you were successful or fluent as an English speaker?</b></li> </ul>
Ought-to Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any pressure on you to study? What kind of pressure and where did it come from? How do you feel about this pressure (if any)?</li> <li>• Do you study because you don't want to disappoint your family and friends? What would happen if you failed? Do they have images of yourself as a failure or jobless? How does that make you feel?</li> <li>• Do you enjoy your classes or do you only study because you have to? What concerns you most about your English ability?</li> </ul>
Language learning experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How would you describe your story with English learning? Did you have a successful learning experience? Was there anyone who influenced your attitude to learn English?</li> <li>• How do you describe a good or useful English class? Can you describe a recent good or bad classroom learning? What happened exactly and who was involved: teacher, peers? What things do you enjoy about your English classes?</li> <li>• What do you like most in your teacher's teaching? What do you think about your teacher's character or personality? Is there anything you wish to change about your teacher? What do you think about the feedback you receive from your teacher?</li> <li>• What do you think your peers? Do you think that they are useful to your learning? What do you like/dislike most about working with your peers?</li> <li>• Do you like/enjoy your course material? What do you like and what you do not about them Do you wish to change anything about your course, assessment, etc?</li> </ul>

### ***Stimulated Recall Interviews (SRI)***

In addition to the main ethnographic interviews, I conducted further interviews to enrich my database; a total of seven stimulated recall interviews were conducted with the key student participants. The benefit of using stimulated recall interviews for language classroom research, as Mackey and Gass (2005) point out, lies in gaining the students' interpretation of events and their thoughts when these events are still alive in their memories. All the SRIs in this study followed significant events in which one of the key participants was involved and which I thought needed more probing in order to understand what happened and why it happened. Following each one of these events, I reviewed the recording (if needed) with the relevant participant on the same day of the observation and asked her, for instance, what thoughts she had at the time of the event, why she acted or reacted that way, or how she felt afterwards. Although not all these interviews yielded important data, some of them provided useful insights which could have been difficult to obtain by other means with the same details.

### ***Interviews with Teachers and Officials***

Interviewing teachers and officials was, in fact, not planned in the initial methodology outline, but the need to conduct these interviews emerged as the empirical study progressed. Many of the initial data required information from the teachers as well as from the officials to clarify particular issues. The interviews with the teachers typically fell within three broad aims: a) understanding their approaches to teaching language and their reflections on their teaching practice; b) eliciting their perception of the study's key

participants whom they teach; c) elaboration and explanation of particular classroom incidents or events I had observed.

The interviews with the school officials typically concerned the school policies and rules in relation to broader educational policies which were aimed at constructing a clearer picture of the study's learning context. The data collected from these interviews were used, for example, in examining links between broader policies and teaching and assessment practices as well as classroom behaviour rules and codes in general. I also conducted two interviews with the social specialist after she became involved with two of my study participants regarding problematic issues with their classroom behaviour and one interview with the principal. Overall, I conducted eight interviews with the teachers, one interview with the School Principal, and two interviews with the social specialist.

### ***Student Diaries***

The inclusion of student diaries as a data collection method in the present study was motivated by my belief that the participants would tell more about their language learning experiences if they were not constrained by specific imposed questions as in the case of interviews. In fact, the decision to incorporate the student diaries into my data collection method was a result of my concerns that some students were too anxious during the interviews to express themselves deeply, especially in the early interviews. Student diaries, as Pavlenko (2006) points out, are commonly used in second language learning as a way to uncover learners' experiences and make sense of their experience because these diaries provide the right conditions for the students to express their feelings and exercise their agency. In the current study, I asked the participants to write

about anything they thought was related to their learning, I encouraged them to express their opinions and true feelings in a casual easy way and not worry about the quality of their writing, and I assured them that their diaries would only be read by myself. All the participants wrote their diaries in Arabic and I agreed with them that they submit their diary on weekly basis and encouraged them to write on a daily basis (see Appendix H for a sample of one student's diary).

These diaries did not only prove to be important in providing additional and different details of the participants' learning experiences, but they were also crucial in providing 'food for thought' for the interviews. In other words, these diaries provided me with a tool to gain access to those students' thoughts and dwell on them in the interviews and also to document situations which I could not access through the classroom observation. Using learner diaries in this way is suggested by Zimmerman and Wieder (1977), who advocate asking research participants to keep diaries, and the written accounts are then elaborated or developed in in-depth interviews.

As Table 4.5 shows, the diaries obtained from each participant were limited only to the first academic term. In fact, none of the participants had kept a learning diary before, which seems to explain why their first diaries reflected only pure description of daily school events with very little reflective accounts or personal feelings. However, later in the term, two of the three participants showed a remarkable change in their diary content, moving from a pure description of lessons to reflective thoughts, critical opinions, and feelings. Although the third participant continued to write, she appeared to struggle with commitment to writing and later told me that she found it hard to write.



Table 4.5: number and dates of diaries obtained from the participants

Participant	Name	Number of obtained diaries	Date Of submission
	Hajer	8	1 <sup>st</sup> diary 30/9/2009 Last diary 5/1/2010
	Nada	7	1 <sup>st</sup> diary 28/9/2009 Last diary 6/1/2010
	Malak	9	1 <sup>st</sup> diary 25/9/2009 Last diary 5/1/2010

## 4.5 Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Throughout the analysis and the interpretation of the current data, I attempted to draw my conclusions by keeping them progressively moulded by the data. Glaser and Strauss (1967) associate such an approach of analyzing and interpreting the data with their conceptualization of *grounded theory*. The authors suggest that the theoretical perspectives are grounded in the data and the researcher's unconfined familiarity with the data enables new ideas to evolve. This approach, according to Kelle (1995), helps to explain new surprising empirical data through the elaboration, modification, or combination of concepts. As the following section explains, I typically followed the process of coding and constructing coding trees by establishing conceptual links and relationships, interpreting these links and drawing conclusions. I describe these procedures in the following sections.

### 4.5.1 Coding and Tracing Conceptual Links

Although the current study did not aim to build a theory as such, I have largely followed grounded theory procedures by adopting a *bottom up inductive approach*. This approach involves scanning the data for categories related to the researched phenomena and searching for relationships among these categories as well as looking for patterns in a

process involving moving from the initials coding to the larger consolidated picture (Creswell, 2008). For each key participant, I analyzed each type of qualitative data (i.e., interview, observation, and diaries) while scanning all sets of data searching for linkages within each participant's data as well as across the three participants' data. The analytical process can be described within the following stages:

- a) *Organizing the data.* The qualitative data was organized by creating a file for each participant and then sub-files were created for each type of data (i.e., transcriptions of interviews, field notes from the observation, transcription of the classroom observation, and diaries).
- b) *Transcribing the data.* Before any data was entered into the related files it was first transcribed. The transcription of interviews and classroom observation took place simultaneously with collecting data which proved more time-consuming but, nevertheless, much of the transcription was done simultaneously. The transcription process was most useful in respect to the analysis process because it provided a written record of each identified concept and relationships between the transcribed events.
- c) *Coding the data.* Categorization of transcribed events appeared to be the way forward in order to manage the large amount of obtained data and allowed patterns of behaviour to emerge. In fact, I thought that I would first transcribe and organize the data in files before I start the analysis process but I found myself, however, engaged with the process of coding and interpreting the data and gradually making more refined categorization which is a process described by Morse et al., (2002) as being fundamental to rigorous ethnographic research.

Table 4.6 below provides an example illustrating how one theme, simultaneously with this process, was produced by identifying conceptual linkages within each participant's selected data and across the whole range of data.

Table 4.6: example of the coding process

Participant	coded text	Interpretation of the underlying meaning	Sub-theme	Theme
Hajer	At this stage after three years of specializing in English I still cannot use English effectively as I expected when I joined this school. That is what everyone expects from me as an English speciality student. I feel disappointed because I still do not have the confidence to write a paragraph in English without making mistakes	Frustration and disappointment caused by failure to living up to expectation to live up to idealized L2 competence.	Un-materialized L2 visions	Tension between L2 selves and L2 learning Situation
Nada	"...I never thought it [learning] would be like that. I thought we would be speaking a lot of English in the class because English is our speciality. After three years of studying English I thought I would be able to speak English fluently	Disappointment with failure to achieve an idealized L2 speaking skills	Un-materialized L2 visions	
Malak	It was the first and only time the teacher spoke English all the time in the class...I think she did that because the language inspector was attending. If she was teaching like that since the beginning of the year, I could be speaking well by now.	Disappointment with failure to develop idealized speaking skills she expected to develop.	Un-materialized L2 visions	

Most of the initial coding was done manually in a Word document in the same format in which it appears in the above table before it was transferred into an Nvivo 8 software project. Working with Nvivo was mostly useful because of its superior data organization features which allowed me to transfer my initial coding memos into nodes and make

further coding and retrieval of data more efficient than working with Word documents. It was simple and quick to select the relevant text and drag-and-drop it into the relevant node.

#### **4.5.2 Classroom Discourse Analysis**

In language classroom research, the analysis of classroom discourse has been approached from various perspectives driven fundamentally by the purpose of the analysis. Researchers who aim to capture differences in the communicative orientation of classroom instruction and to examine their effects on learning outcomes have typically used classroom observation schemes such as Allen et al.'s (1984) Communicative Orientation of Language Teaching (COLT). Other researchers who have investigated the implications of turn-taking in student/teacher interactions for the effectiveness of teaching and learning have adopted the initiation-response-follow-up (IRF) sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). From a different perspective, researchers who sought to understand how classroom talk reflects and reproduces underlying power relations and ideologies (such as in postcolonial language classrooms) typically adopt Foucault's (1970) perspective on discourse as text that is generated by discursive formations with underlying particular ideologies and particular ways of controlling power.

In ethnographic research, classroom discourse looks not only at the distribution of turns but also at the available options for turn taking and the extent to which different participants take these up (Van Lier, 1988). According to Creese (2005), the ethnography of classroom interaction combines an *emic* focus (which aims to describe and understand the local meaning-making processes of participants' language in use)

with *etic* focus (which consists of a list of universal components and functions constituting speech events which is used to guide the researcher as an aide memoire in the field). By adopting an ethnographic approach to classroom discourse, I was particularly inspired by Lin's (2007) views that ethnographic classroom discourse analysis is not at odds with the structured *fine grained* perspectives described above, because both can be effectively integrated to transcend the limitations of the structured models. The fine grained models, according to the author, help us analyze only one portion of the activity system in which our participants are situated, while ethnography has an important role to play in our research as it is needed to uncover and analyze other important components of the activity system.

Therefore, given the ethnographic nature of the current study, the analysis of the classroom interactions adopted an IRF format in order to have a structure showing who is talking and who is controlling the course of the talk, while the actual focus was on: first, the social context in which the participants' interactions took place; second, the engagement patterns of the participants; third, what the participants said, fourth, in which language it was said; and fifth, how the participants' classroom discourses were related to their L2 selves. In other words, the analysis of the classroom interaction was not particularly concerned with the learning outcome as much as it was concerned with the participation and engagement patterns of the participants and what these patterns imply for the participants' learning motivation dynamics. It is important to mention that only critical episodes were transcribed and it was only those which I saw as theoretically significant or corresponding to the themes that were used in this thesis. However, during the ongoing process of data analysis, which necessarily involved constant drafting and polishing of arguments, the interactional episodes began to disappear from my data

analysis sections as they became less significant in supporting my arguments, and this explains the fact that there are only few interactional extracts appearing in this thesis.

## **4.6 The Quantitative Study**

As mentioned above, the current study combined both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative study was based on one student questionnaire, which was administrated during the first week of the fieldwork. The aim was to answer the following two questions:

- a. What are the motivational dispositions and orientations that can best describe the L2 selves of learners in English-specialized schools in Libya and how do these representations differ from findings reported in other international learning contexts?*
- b. How do these learners' L2 selves relate to their classroom learning experience?*

The aim to include a questionnaire was prompted by the need to generate quantitative findings that would enable me to obtain generalizable findings describing what characterizes the L2 selves in English-speciality schools in Libya, and also to enable me to compare the findings with the existing literature on the L2 Self System, which has been by and large quantitative. The second aim of the questionnaire was also to generate data that could provide a snap shot able to generally describe the relationship between factors specific to the classroom learning situation and the L2 selves in this particular context of learning. My conceptualization of the L2 learning experience, of course, goes beyond the classroom-specific factors, but I decided to limit this

conceptualization in the questionnaire to classroom-specific factors because the broad concepts I identified in the SLA research are fundamentally qualitative and did not seem to lend themselves to quantitative examination. The questionnaire scales are described in details in the following section (see Appendix A for a list of the Scale Items and appendix B for the final Arabic version of the questionnaire).

#### 4.6.1 The Questionnaire Scales

The questionnaire was composed of ninety-two items comprising thirteen scale variables. The participants had to indicate their answers on a five-point scale stating to what extent the statements described their own feelings and opinions (Absolutely true- Mostly true - Partly true/Partly untrue - Not really true - Not true at all). The variables appearing in the final version of the questionnaire were as follows:

- *Intended learning effort* (8 items from Ryan, 2009). This variable is the criterion measure assessing the learners' intended efforts to learning English. It has been commonly used by many researchers to measure learners' motivational density and is assumed to reflect their motivational performance (e.g., Csizer & Dörnyei, 2005; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). An example of a scale item: *I am willing to work hard to learn English.*
- The *ideal L2 self* (9 items from Taguchi et al., 2009). This variable measures students' views of themselves as future successful L2 users. This variable is one component of the L2 Self System which is the main theoretical focus of this study and the scale items have been adopted by many researchers (Csizer & Dörnyei, 2009; Ryan, 2009; Taguchi et al., 2009). An example of the scale items: *I like to think of myself as someone who will be able to speak English.*

- *Ought-to L2 self* (10 items from Taguchi et al., 2009). This variable measures students' perceptions of L2 learning as motivated by external influences such as a sense of obligation and responsibility towards others. This variable is the second component of the L2 self and the scale items have been adopted by many other studies (e.g., Csizer & Kormos, 2009). An example of a scale item: *I learn English because there is pressure on me to do so.*
- *The feared L2 Self* (4 items, designed for this study). This variable measures students' perception of the possibility of failing their study and the perceived consequences of this failure. The feared self has been discussed within the L2 Self System but has not been empirically examined as a variable despite the fact that it has been argued that in order for the ideal self to be motivationally effective it has to be combined with the feared possible self (e.g., Markus & Nurius, 1986; Dörnyei, 2005, 2009). An example of a scale item: *I sometimes imagine myself jobless as a result of failing my study.*
- *International posture* (7 items from Yashima, 2002). This variable measures the students' attitudes towards English as an international language and towards the *global community*. This variable has been recognized as a strong representative of the L2 self in various L2 learning contexts around the world (e.g., Yashima, 2002, 2009; Csizer and Kormos, 2009) and it was important to examine how it was construed in the Libyan context. An example of a scale item: *Studying English will help me to understand people from all over the world.*
- *Integrativeness* (4 items, Gardner, 1985). This variable measures students' attitude towards native L2 speakers and L2 culture and has been found to be a



salient representative of learners' L2 self, which makes it crucial to examine in the Libyan context. An example of a scale item: *I like to become similar to the people who speak English.*

- *Instrumentality Promotion & Instrumentality Prevention* (7 items & 6 items, respectively, from Taguchi et al., 2009). These two variables measure the two dimensions of instrumentality. The aim of including these variables is particularly important in the light of the nature of the current participants' learning (i.e., English-major) and the implications for their L2 selves. An example of a scale item of instrumentality promotion: *studying English can be important to me because it will help me to get a good job*, and of instrumentality prevention: *I have to study English because without passing English I cannot graduate.*
- *Parental encouragement* (4 Items: from Ryan, 2009). This variable measures the participants' perception of the role of parents in their learning. I was particularly interested to find out the results concerning this variable because of the unique socio-cultural structure of Libyan society. An example of the scale items: *I am often told by my parents that English is important for my future.*
- *Perceived teacher competence and teaching style* (10 items from Kubanyiova, 2006). This variable is the first of the classroom-specific variables that were selected to investigate the micro-context of the L2 learning situation. It aims to measure the students' perception of their teachers' teaching competence and teaching style in relation to their L2 selves. An example of the variable: *Most of my teachers are good at teaching English.*

- *Attitudes towards the course materials* (7 items: 5 items from Kubanyiova, 2006) and 2 items created for this study). This variable measures the students' perception of the course materials in regard to the elements of interest and relevance. An example of the scale items: *I am satisfied with my text-book and course materials.*
- *Group cohesiveness* (7 items: adapted from Kubanyiova, 2006). This variable measures the extent to which the students perceive their peer relationships with other learners to be cohesive. An example of the item scales: *I could work easily with most of students in this class.*
- *Group goal-orientatedness* (8 items, adapted from Kubanyiova, 2006). This variable measures the extent to which the students perceive their classrooms were attuned to pursuing the goal of English learning. An example of the item scales: *Students in this class usually stop working if the teacher is not paying attention.*
- *Perceived teacher rapport and commitment* (7 items adapted from Kubanyiova, 2006). This variable measures the students' perception of the social dimension of their relationship with their teachers. An example of the scale items: *Most of my teachers take a personal interest in students.*

The data obtained from the questionnaire were analysed by using SPSS version 17.0. Table 4.7 below shows the internal reliability consistency coefficient of the scale variables used in the questionnaire. As the Table shows, there is a high level of consistency reliability of the questionnaire scales, which can be attributed to the fact that these variables were imported from pre-established and tested scales in different

international contexts as well as to the pilot study which I describe in the following section.

Table 4.7: internal reliability consistency coefficient of the scale items

<i><b>Factor</b></i>	<i><b>No of items</b></i>	<i><b>Cronbach Alpha <math>\alpha</math></b></i>
Ideal L2 Self	8	.813
Ought-to L2 self	10	.855
Intended effort	8	.850
International Posture	7	.871
Integrativeness	4	.815
Instrumentality Promotion	7	.742
Instrumentality Prevention	6	.842
Parental Encouragement	4	.572
Teacher competence	10	.813
Teacher Rapport	7	.616
Group Cohesiveness	6	.773
Group Goal Orientedness	8	.711
Course Materials	4	.728

#### 4.6.2 Piloting the Questionnaire

A pilot study of the questionnaire was conducted to examine the questions closely and allow the resolution of a number of methodological difficulties early before the main administration of the questionnaire, which aimed to enhance the rigour of the questionnaire. A week before I started my fieldwork early in September 2009, I carried out a pilot study to check the wording and order of the questionnaire items and the responses of the students and the process as a whole. I conducted the pilot study in the same school in three classrooms with one class representing each year (first, second, and third years). Forty-two students took part in the pilot study and filled in the Arabic version of the questionnaire. The participants were told about the purpose of the pilot

study and were encouraged to mention any problems with understanding or clarity of the items. Completion time was also taken into account. Based on the respondents' comments, the wording of five items was changed. Two items were deleted after running an internal reliability consistency test in order to improve the internal reliability consistency coefficient (one item from the ideal L2 self scale and one item from the international posture scale). Following these adjustments, the final version was produced for the main study.

### 4.6.3 Administrrating the Questionnaire

The day before I administrated the questionnaire I visited each class of the six classes in the school to explain the aim of my study in general and the questionnaire in particular. I explained what I expected the students to do and assured them of the confidentiality of the information they would provide while stressing the fact that participation was voluntary, but desirable for the success of the study. I managed to have enough teachers who expressed their willingness to help in administrating the questionnaire after the end of the school day. A total of 126 students took part in filling in the questionnaire and approximately 35 minutes were spent on completing the questionnaire in each class. Table 4.8 below shows the distribution of the total number of students who filled the questionnaire:

Table 4.8: Distribution of the respondents to the questionnaire

	Girls	Boys	Total
First year	39	4	43
Second year	42	4	46
Third year	34	3	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>126</b>

The analysis of the questionnaire started immediately after the fieldwork ended. The data was entered into SPSS version 17.0 to carry out the required analytical tests after the internal reliability consistency of the scales was checked and the scores of negatively worded items were reversed. The mean of each scale was calculated and correlational analysis was conducted to examine the linear relationship and the degree of association between the two L2 self constructs and the other variables which I listed above.

#### **4.8 Ethical Issues**

In the current research, I made sure that I have adhered to ethical guidelines for educational research set by BERA (2004). I began with obtaining permission to approach the school from the local educational authority and I also obtained consent from the teachers whose classes I wanted to observe and reassured them that they had the right to withdraw whenever they wanted. I also assured them that they would not be identified by name in my written materials. I made sure that I explained the nature of my research to every party involved in my research. I obtained informed consent from the students who took part in the qualitative study and explained to them their right to anonymity, confidentiality of information and their right to withdraw.

During the fieldwork period, I had also to ensure the welfare of the participants as part of adhering to ethical research principles. This particular principle appeared to be challenging in practice since obtaining prior informed consent from the participants does not mean that they are safe from the inconveniences that commitment to the long process of research may bring along. In other words, the informed consent is often obtained before the study is initiated when the direction of research is still unknown, which leaves the participants, as Cassell (1982) points out, with little idea about what is implied on the

long term. The problem may also lay in the issue of the participants' motivation to take part in a particular study. As Vaughan (2004) points out, the participants' motivation to take part in research is frequently triggered by the desire to please an authority figure, intellectual or professional curiosity, or unwillingness to refuse a request. In fact, this seemed to be the case with some teachers whom I observed; as the observation of classrooms was ongoing, I started to suspect that some teachers had agreed to be observed out of duress or coercion. This thought was triggered by one incident in which a third-year teacher explicitly expressed her discomfort with being observed during the fifth week of the empirical study. As I stood with that particular teacher outside her classroom waiting for the students to get into the class first, the teacher suddenly asked me why my research was taking so long, and asked me about what I was continuously writing down while I was observing her. She then added that every time I observed her classes she felt anxious and not sure about what she was doing. It was clear from her talk that my presence caused her anxiety and discomfort as well as disruption to her teaching even though I had made it clear for her, as well as for the other teachers, that my focus was on the key student participants and not on judging or evaluating their teaching practice. Although this particular teacher did not say explicitly that she wanted to withdraw, I was compelled to stop observing her after I had apologized for the harm that I seemed to have caused her.

It appears that the issue of researcher-researched relationships and particularly the issue of the power and authority which apparently I was assumed to possess was the underlying reason for this situation to occur. It is the issue of power which Patai (1991) claims makes research relationships irreducibly oppressive and exploitative, and makes truly ethical research impossible. In fact, the thought of causing distress to teachers by

observing their classes was an issue that I considered early in the study, which triggered my efforts to explain the nature and the purpose of the classroom observation activity and encourage the teachers to ignore my presence and act normally. I also tried to balance the inequality of the researcher-researched relationship by attempting to develop *reciprocal* relationships with the teacher (Kubanyiova, 2008) which, although it was successful with some teachers, others seemed to prefer to distance themselves, and this distancing made it difficult to understand how they felt about being observed. After that particular incident I discussed this problem with the other teachers who all said that observing them was not a problem. However, there was no way of knowing the extent to which their responses reflected their true feelings and, therefore, I could only rely on my observation of their reaction to my presence in their classes and my intuition to figure out whether or not they were at ease with this presence.

The second ethical issue which required special and careful consideration in the current study concerns the balance between my interview agenda and the expectations of the key student participants from attending these interviews. When I first asked a group of students if they wanted to take part in the qualitative study, they showed clear enthusiasm and willingness to take part as key participants in the study. One reason for such enthusiasm appeared later to be triggered by their curiosity and desire to get in touch with someone whom they perceived as an English expert and who lived in England. This appeared to be the case as the interviews were taking place in different scenarios: one participant often came to the interviews with notes she took during her class and asked me to clarify and explain certain language information; on two occasions one participant brought her exam papers asking me if the marks given by her teacher were fair; a third participant wanted to write her diary in English and asked me to

provide feedback on her language; another participant who quit the study later was always eager to ask about life abroad and wanted to hear my personal stories of life in England. In other words, while I arrived to each interview with my own research agenda, the participants similarly came with their own plans and expectations and, hence, an ethical dilemma occurred pertaining to the extent to which I should live up to the students' expectations while pursuing my own goals. Guillemin and Gillam (2004) highlighted such situations since ethical tension may arise from the fact that researchers are driven by their research ends, which are usually not intended for the benefit of the participants, even though some indirect benefit may take place. In the current case, it was the participants who determined what was beneficiary for them as a reward of participating in the study. In spite of the diffusion caused by the participants' interest, I maintained my intention to provide the most benefit possible to the participants, including what they expected to gain from attending these interviews, even though that came at the expense of the time allocated to these interviews.

In sum, what I have shown in this section is the ethical challenges I have encountered during the course of my fieldwork and the fact that I have endeavoured to satisfy the fundamental ethics guidelines and also tried to attend to the "ethically important moments" (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004) when I was made aware of these moments. I shall conclude this section by expressing my intention to disseminate the findings of this research to my sponsors, Higher Education Ministry in Libya, and will also make these findings available to the school where this research was conducted.



## **4.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have described the methodological design of the current study by providing a detailed description of the overall design, methods of data collection and their rationale and the processes of administration, sampling, data analysis approach and the rationales of these processes. I concluded by reporting the ethical procedures and challenges I have encountered. In the following chapters, I will present the analysis of the quantitative data.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Tracing Representations of the L2 Self in the Quantitative Data**

The aim of the current study was to investigate what motivational orientations constitute the representations of the L2 selves of the Libyan students in English-speciality schools and how these selves relate to their L2 learning situation. The aim of this chapter is to address this aim through analyzing and discussing the results of the quantitative data which were obtained from the student questionnaire. It is hoped that the findings will provide statistical support or points of comparison to further in-depth analysis of the qualitative data in the subsequent chapters.

The chapter is divided into two main parts: first, in order to investigate the representations of the students' L2 selves, the first part presents and discusses the correlational analysis between the *ideal L2 self* and the *ought-to L2 self*, on one hand, and the rest of the motivational variables on the other hand. Second, in order to investigate the relationship between two L2 selves and the L2 learning situation, the second part presents and discusses the correlational analysis between the *ideal L2 self* and the *ought-to L2 self* on one hand and the classroom-specific variables on the other. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings and implications for the analysis in the subsequent chapters.

## 5.1 Correlational Analysis

Bivariate correlational analysis was performed in this study to examine and explain the strength and direction of the linear relationships between the L2 self variables and the other variables. I will first begin with Table 5.1 below which shows correlations between the L2 intended effort, which is the criterion measure, and the motivational variables. The aim is to examine the motivational significance of these variables before I carry out further analysis :

Table 5.1: correlation between the L2 Intended Effort and the other motivational variables

<i>Factor</i>	<i>L2 Intended Effort</i>
Ideal L2 Self	.595**
Ought-to L2 Self	.212*
Feared L2 Self	-.039
L2 Intended Effort	1
Parental encouragement	-.207*
Instrumentality Promotion	.428**
International Posture	.374**
Instrumentality Prevention	-.169
Integrativeness	.289**

*Correlations significant at the \* p < 0.05 level; \*\* p < 0.001 level*

As the table shows, there are significant correlations between the L2 intended effort variable, on one hand, and the *ideal L2 self*, *ought-L2 self*, *instrumentality promotion*, *international posture*, and *integrativeness* variables on the other hand. The table also shows a negative correlation between the *L2 intended effort* variables and the parental encouragement variable. We can see from this brief look at the correlational analysis that the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self show meaningful correlation with the L2

intended effort. This suggests that, similarly to studies across many other geographical contexts (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2009), the L2 Self System can be a useful framework to explain engagement in L2 learning in the context of English-speciality secondary schools in Libya. What is also clear from the results, however, is the fairly strong relationship of a host of other variables with the students' L2 intended effort. A close look at these links can reveal important insights into the nature of the Libyan students' future guides and I intend to examine this further in the following sections, starting with the intriguing relationship between the two L2 self variables and two specific variables; the *international posture* and *integrativeness*.

### 5.1.1 Correlations between the International Posture, Integrativeness, and the L2 Self

After we have seen the significance of the participants' L2 Selves in defining their intended L2 effort, now I will focus on what represents these L2 selves. The participants' future L2 selves appear to identify particularly with the *international posture* factor and the *integrativeness* factor. As Table 5.2 below shows, there is a significant correlation between the *international posture* and *integrativeness* on one hand and the ideal L2 self on the other.

Table 5.2: Correlations between the ideal L2 self, international posture and integrativeness

Factor	<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	<i>Ought-to L2Self</i>
International Posture	.458**	.353**
Integrativeness	.334**	.243**

Correlations significant at the \*  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\*  $p < 0.001$  level

As the above table shows, the ideal L2 self shows stronger correlations than the ought-to L2 self with both the international posture and the integrativeness variables. On the other hand, the international posture variable shows stronger correlations than the integrativeness variable with the two L2 selves. The strength of the correlation between the international posture and the ideal L2 self in these results suggests that the Libyan students in the English-specialized schools were able to enrich their ideal L2 self as future users of English by creating images of themselves as members of the international community, which echoes findings in other international contexts, especially in Asian contexts (e.g., Lamb, 2004; Warden & Lin, 2000; Yashima, 2002, 2009), in Hungary (e.g., Csizer & Kormos, 2009), and in Chile (Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizér, 2011). On another level, the fact that the international posture factor overrides the integrative factor in regard to their correlation with the ideal L2 self suggests the participants' positive attitudes towards the international community were stronger than their attitudes towards the L2 community and L2 culture in respect to how they envisaged and related their future L2 selves as English users to the outside world. In other words, it can be said that the significant role of international posture seems to reflect the tendency of the Libyan learners to relate their desired future L2 selves to the international community rather than to any specific L2 group, supporting the view that the construct of international posture is more pertinent to EFL contexts.

Particular to the current study, the apparent important role of the international orientation to learning English is likely to have been enhanced by the recent shift in Libyan's international policies that brought the country out of decades of isolation and reactivated its membership in the international community. These policies can be seen in the return of international businesses and investments, access to foreign media sources

and international cultural artefacts, and the widening use of multimedia technology which has facilitated contact with the outside world. All these factors have reinforced the Libyans' perception of English as an important international language and created a great demand for learning English in order to either pursue career goals or be in step with the events and the advancement of the world. In other words, as for many L2 learners in other learning contexts, English for the Libyan learners has become something that connects them to the international community and global culture and represents a tool for career enhancement as well as personal development.

However, given the socio-political structure of Libya, which has made the capital Tripoli the main likely beneficiary of the recent policies of reaching out towards the international world, the current results regarding the role of the international posture in a rural city like Nalut pose challenging questions. This is because the growing presence of foreigners, the booming job opportunities related to international businesses, and increasing presence of cultural activities such as music festivals and art fairs have been mainly concentrated in Tripoli. Furthermore, young girls' aspirations to travel abroad are likely to be restricted by the fact that societies in rural areas remain conservative and do not encourage travelling alone or unmonitored exposure to western cultural products. Therefore, the current results are even more intriguing given the fact that 111 out of the 126 participants were girls, which seems to challenge the norms of gender constraints embedded in their society. These results might be better understood through an in-depth qualitative insight into the participants' visions of themselves as members of the international community in the subsequent chapters.

### 5.1.2 Correlation between Instrumentality and the L2 Self

The *instrumentality* variable was measured through its two dimensions, *promotional instrumentality* and *preventive instrumentality*. The results of the correlational analysis appear in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3: Correlation between instrumentality promotion/prevention and the L2 selves

Factor	Instrumentality Promotion	Instrumentality Prevention
Ideal L2 self	.360**	-.211*
Ought-to L2 self	.042	.379**
L2 Intended Effort	.428**	-.169

Correlations significant at the \*  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\*  $p < 0.001$  level

As Table 5.3 shows, *instrumentality promotion* shows significant correlation with the *ideal L2 self* ( $r = .36^{**}$ ) whereas it shows no correlation with the *ought-to L2 self* variable. Instrumentality prevention, on the other hand, shows negative correlation with the *ideal L2 self* whereas it shows significant correlation with the *ought-to L2 self*. These results provide strong support for the theoretical claim which associates the promotional dimension of instrumentality with the ideal self and the preventive dimension with the ought-to self (e.g., Higgins, 1998; Dörnyei, 2009). The findings also converge with those of Taguchi et al. (2009), which show evidence of this association.

The promotional dimension of instrumentality seems particularly important in the context of this study. The high correlation between the ideal L2 self and the promotional dimension suggests that students' perception of their possible future careers was only related to their personally valued future visions and not to some external influences such

their parents' influence. This result may be interpreted through the nature of the relationship between parents and their children's education in Libya; school learning and future planning for the Libyan students is a private business because the parents are not traditionally part of their children's school life or their future planning. This interpretation is supported by the lack of correlation between the *parental encouragement* variable and the *ideal L2 self* which will be explained in the next section. Furthermore, it has not been common in Libya for students to think of their future careers as a source to repay and support their parents, which was the case amongst the Chinese and Iranian L2 students according to Tacuchi et al. (2009)'s findings. In Libya, young graduates are faced with great financial challenges and demands and they often have to seek extra income sources in addition to their main salaries to meet these demands. Because the government does not support the graduates through bank loans for housing and essential life expenses, it is actually the parents who are traditionally expected to assist their children financially during their early career and not the reverse.

While the positive correlation between the *ought-to L2 self* variable and *prevention instrumentality* variable should come as no surprise, it did, indeed, pose a question in the light of the lack of correlation between the *feared L2 self* and the *ought-to L2 self* ( $r = .083$ ). This is because the *prevention instrumentality* factor and the *feared L2 self* factor were expected to yield similar results, since they are both based on motivation to prevent and/or avoid undesired future outcomes. However, a closer look at the scale items which constituted the scales of both the *prevention instrumentality* variable and *feared L2 self* variable revealed that the feared L2 self was strongly based on the fear of *school failure* while the prevention instrumentality items were based on being careful to avoid mistakes



and concerns over earning low grades or not gaining good English skills. Table 5.4 below shows two items from each scale as an example:

Table 5.4: Comparison between the scale items of *ought-to L2 self*, *instrumentality prevention*, and *feared L2 self*

Variable	Instrumentality Prevention	The feared L2 self
<b>Example items</b>	Studying English is important for me because I will be frustrated if I got bad grades in English.	I worry about failing my study.
	Studying English is important for me because if I do not have the knowledge of English I will be considered as weak student.	I worry I may drop out of the school.

This examination of these different pieces of data suggested that it may be the case that the factor of *fear of school failure* did not really play a role in shaping the students' L2 selves. In fact, the qualitative data can provide some support to this view. The qualitative data suggests that fear of school failure as a motivating force was *insignificant* in motivating the students to put extra effort to learn because the norm which was prevalent among these students indicated that "*nobody fails*", as one student put it. This is because the norms of teaching and learning as well as the rules of assessment, as I will elaborate on in the following chapter, made success - to a great extent - taken for granted once the student passed the first year. This seems to explain why the *feared L2 self* variable did not correlate with the L2 intended effort ( $r = -.039$ ) as Table 5.1 shows. Taken together, these findings indicate that the factor of fear of school failure in the current learning context did not seem to be part of the participants'

L2 selves, which would have a significant impact on their intended effort in the English learning classroom.

In sum, we can conclude two main points from the results of the *instrumentality* variables; the first point suggests that the students' desire to pursue future career and other life promotional opportunities were likely to strengthen their ideal L2 selves, leading to the enhancement of their L2 motivation in such a way that they would invest more learning effort to materialize their promotionally-oriented L2 selves. On the other hand, the students' motivation to pursue their ought-to L2 selves was likely to be fuelled by their desire, duties and obligations to avoid unwanted future outcomes, which did not necessarily include failing the school.

### 5.1.3 Correlation between Parental Encouragement and the L2 Self

Another intriguing finding concerns the results of the *parental encouragement* variable, which shows no correlation with either the two *L2 self* variables or with the *L2 intended effort* variable, while it shows significant correlation with the *feared L2 self* variable. Table 5.5 below shows the correlation between the parental encouragement variable and the rest of the variables.

Table 5.5: Correlation between Parental Encouragement and other variables

Factor	Parental encouragement
Ideal L2 Self	-.006
Ought-to L2 Self	.080
L2 Intended Effort	-.039
Feared L2 Self	.213*

*Correlations significant at the \*  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\*  $p < 0.001$  level*

These results appear particularly interesting because they suggest that the parents in the Libyan L2 learning context have very little role to play in their children's L2 learning. In fact, the lack of correlation between parental encouragement and the ideal L2 self is not particular to this study's findings because similar results were reported by many other studies in different contexts (e.g., Csizer and Kormos 2009; Kormos et al., 2011; Taguchi et al., 2009). However, the lack of correlation between the *ought-to L2 self* and *parental encouragement* seems to be at odds with both the theoretical principles associated with the ought-to L2 self as well as with the many studies which found that parents' influence was particularly found to contribute to students' sense of obligation and responsibility to learn the L2, that is, the ought-to L2 self (Atay & Kurt, 2010; Dörnyei, 2005; Kormos, Kiddle, & Csizer, 2011; Ryan, 2009). The same applies to the L2 *intended effort* variable; the lack of correlation between parental encouragement variable and L2 *intended effort variable* comes in stark contrast with the previous L2 motivational research which often reported the positive influence of parents on their children's motivational intensity to learn the L2 (e.g., Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner 1985; Csizer & Kormos 2009; Lamb, 2009).

It may be possible that these results reflect the socio-cultural context of learning in Libya in regard to the parents' involvement in their children's school learning which I have already mentioned briefly earlier. Students' learning experiences in Libya have often been seen as taking place independently of their parents' involvement, especially in their adolescence. This is not to say that education is not valued by Libyan parents, but the relationship between the school and the parents has not been traditionally part of the students' learning experience as is the case in the western context. The lack of parental involvement in children's learning has been commonly associated with large family size

and low educational level among parents, which seems to be the case for the nature of families in Libya. Furthermore, the fact that the participants were adolescents aged between 15 and 18 years old suggests that their contact with their parents was likely to be at its minimum point because at this stage of adulthood, as Epstein (2001) contends, adolescents are likely to resist parental involvement in their lives, including their learning.

From another perspective, the lack of correlation between *parental encouragement* and *ought-to L2 self* seems to make some sense in light of the meaningful correlation between the *feared L2 self* and *parental encouragement* ( $r = .213^*$ ) in combination with relevant findings from the qualitative data. This meaningful correlation suggests that it might be the case that parental encouragement was tapping only into the students' feared L2 self. However, one can argue in this case that the feared L2 self is assumed to have motivational influence, which is not the case in the current results, as the correlation between parental encouragement and L2 intended effort suggests ( $r = -.039$ ). As I will discuss in the following two chapters, the parental role in the students' L2 learning did not take the form of *explicit* encouragement but, rather, the parents' role was generally perceived by the students in the sense of implicit expectations of passing the exams placed on them by their parents. Because learning achievement in Libyan schools is commonly perceived through the passing of exams and moving to the following learning stage, the parents may not see the need to become involved in their children's learning when they perceive them as capable of passing their exams. In this situation, parents tend to take the success of their children for granted; as one participant put it, "[my parents] do not ask because they know that I will pass," which means the parents may not need to express their expectations explicitly to their children. More importantly, the

fact that the *parental encouragement* variable tapped into the feared L2 self variable means that it had no role in the participants' L2 selves because, as has been explained in the previous section, the fear of school failure did not emerge as a significant factor in influencing the students' motivation to learn.

In short, the overall picture gathered from this section suggests that parental encouragement plays very little role in shaping the current participants' L2 selves. This result can be attributed to two main socio-cultural factors that have seemingly undermined the role of parents in their children's L2 learning in the Libyan context: the first factor pertains to the nature of the relationship between the Libyan parents and the school, which has not traditionally been a feature reflected in the Libyan students' learning experiences. The second factor concerns the fact that learning achievement is perceived by Libyan parents only through obtaining passing grades, and when they trust their children's ability to pass their exams, they become less impelled to involve themselves in their children's learning. I will revisit the issue of parental encouragement in the following two chapters but now I will move on to examine the results of classroom-specific variables.

## **5.2 Results of Classroom-Specific Variables**

The analysis and discussion presented in this chapter have so far addressed the representations of the participants' future L2 selves. In this second part of this chapter, I will move to the other focus of the quantitative study which is concerned with the examination of the relationship between the students' L2 selves and the classroom-specific variables. It is important to reiterate that, although I conceive of the L2 learning situation more broadly than the immediate classroom situation, I will pay

attention only to the classroom-related factors of the L2 learning situation in this quantitative study and I will address this situation from a broader conceptualization in the qualitative study in the subsequent chapters. As I described in the previous chapter, five variables measuring the L2 learning situation from a classroom-specific perspective were included in the questionnaire, namely, *teacher competence*, *teacher rapport*, *group cohesiveness*, *group goal orientedness*, and *course materials*. Bivariate correlation analysis was carried out to examine the linear relationship between the *ideal L2 self*, the *ought-to L2 self* and the *intended L2 effort* on the one hand and the classroom-specific variables, which was aimed at answering the following research question:

- In what way do the participants' L2 selves relate to their immediate classroom experience and what does this relationship imply for their learning motivation to archive these selves?

Before I proceed to discuss the intriguing relationship in the correlational analysis results of the classroom specific factors, I will first present Table 5.6, which shows the frequency analysis of the classroom specific factors to which I will be referring to throughout the rest of this chapter.

Table 5.6: Frequency analysis of the classroom-specific factors

<i>Factor</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Teacher Competence	124	2.71	419
Teacher Rapport	124	2.57	441
Group Cohesiveness	124	3.53	895
Goal Orientedness	124	2.73	379
Course Materials	124	3.11	786

I would like to remind the reader that I used a six point-scale to measure these variables and anything above 3 shows a more favourable evaluation. As can be seen in the above table, the students' appraisals of their teachers' *competence* and *rappor*t are below average indicating that these two factors may not have a positive motivating influence on the learners, and therefore, may not support their L2 selves. The only two variables which the students on average seem to appraise more favourably are *group cohesiveness* and *course materials* which indicates that these two factors are more likely to contribute to their learning motivation.

Moving to the correlation analysis results, Table 5.7 below shows the correlation coefficient between the ideal L2 self, the ought-to L2 self and the intended L2 effort on one hand and the classroom-specific variables on the other. I will discuss these results in depth starting with the teacher's variables and will specifically begin with the teacher competence variable.

Table 5.7: Correlation between L2 selves, intended effort, and classroom-specific factors

	<i>Teacher Competence</i>	<i>Teacher Rapport</i>	<i>Group Cohesiveness</i>	<i>Group Goal Orientedness</i>	<i>Course Materials</i>
<i>Ideal L2 Self</i>	.242**	-.060	.213*	-.120	.072
<i>Ought-to L2 Self</i>	-.106	.388**	.083	.038	.222*
<i>L2 Intended Effort</i>	.180*	-.144	.221*	-.031	.232**

*Correlations significant at the \* p < 0.05 level; \*\* p < 0.001 level*

### 5.2.1 Correlation between Teacher Competence and the L2 Self

As Table 5.7 shows, the *teacher competence* variable shows meaningful correlation with the *ideal L2 self* variable ( $r = .242^{**}$ ). This indicates that the more competent the teacher is perceived to be by the students the stronger ideal selves they will have. On the other hand, the positive correlation between the *teacher competence* variable and the *L2 intended effort* variable ( $r = .180^*$ ) indicates that the more the students perceived their teachers as competent the more motivated they will be to expend effort in their L2 learning. Therefore, these results indicate in this study's context, the perception of L2 teachers as competent is likely to impact on the strength of the students' ideal L2 selves and also lead to stronger learning motivation to materialize these ideal selves.

Looking at these results from another perspective, one can say that the more *incompetent* students perceive their teachers to be, the weaker their ideal L2 selves are. This, however, did not seem to be always the case in the qualitative data because the qualitative data indicated that the students' perception of their teachers as incompetent in L2 does not necessarily lead to the weakening of their ideal L2 selves, if these selves are not contingent on gaining L2 competence. In other words, when the students' ideal L2 selves were contingent on earning top grades, the teacher's competence did matter, as will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 7. However, this 'qualitative' insight into the results instigated a close examination of the quantitative data by running a correlational analysis after the database was split according to the year-of-study groups, that is, first-year, second-year, and third-year group. This result suggests that the positive correlation between the *ideal L2 self* and the *intended L2 effort* factor on one hand and teacher competence on the other occurred only with the first-year group. Table 5.8 shows this correlation.



Table 5.8: correlation between teacher competence, the ideal L2 self, and the intended learning effort between the three study groups

Year of study	Number of students	Factor	Teacher Competence
Year one	36	Ideal L2 Self	.386*
Year two	46	Ideal L2 Self	.195
Year three	42	Ideal L2 Self	.127

*Correlations significant at the \*  $p < 0.05$  level*

The above table clearly shows that it is only the first-year group results which show a significant correlation between the *teacher competence* variable and the *ideal L2 self* whereas the second-year and the third-year groups results show no correlation between the two variables. While I realize that one should not make big claims from a single correlational result, I do think that a possible interpretation is needed here. The interpretation of this result may be attributed to the *time* factor in the early stages of transition to a new learning environment since the first-year group in this study have just embarked on the new experience of the secondary school stage when this questionnaire was carried out. During this stage, students tend to rely mainly on the teacher to fuel their future potentials and this relationship is adjusted as they progress with their studies. As they progress through their learning stages, the students may become unhappy with their teachers' competence and need to look for other sources for fuelling their ideal visions. Moreover, the lack of positive relationship between *teacher competence* and the students *ideal L2 selves* may be a result of natural development – as their visions grow stronger, more specific and vivid, and more/less plausible, they need to rely less and less on their classroom learning situation and flourish despite unfavourable L2 learning situations. In the early stages of ideal self development, however, unfavourable L2

learning situations (such as unsatisfactory teacher competence) can be detrimental to the students' construction of ideal selves, especially if there are no alternative sources for developing these visions (such as lack of parental encouragement). The nature of this relationship between *teacher competence* and the *ideal L2 self* will become clearer as more in-depth analysis and discussion on this relationship follows in Chapter 7, but now I will turn to the relationship between the *teacher rapport* variable and the *ought-to L2 self*.

### 5.2.2 Correlation between Teacher Rapport and the L2 Self

As Table 5.8 shows, there is a significant correlation relationship between the *teacher rapport* variable and the *ought-to L2 self* variable ( $r = .388^{**}$ ). This significant correlation suggests that the students' rapport/friendship with their teacher will have a direct impact on the construction of their ought to selves – perhaps because of the students' desire to please their teacher. In other words- as documented by Kubanyiova (in press) in literature on language teachers' possible selves- positive relationships between the students and the teacher may (at least initially) work towards constructing ought-to rather than ideal selves. This may not only be related to examinations and striving for good grades but with genuinely wanting to please the teacher which means that if the teacher/student rapport is strong, it is only natural that the students will feel an urge to study harder so as not to disappoint the teacher whom they respect. This seems to make even more sense in the Libyan context of learning in general because the traditional nature of teacher-student relationships, in which the teacher is seen as an authoritative figure to whom the students are expected to show respect out of beliefs of duty, responsibility and common sense.

### 5.2.3 Correlation Between Learner-Group Factors and the L2 Self

In this section, I will look at the results of the *group cohesiveness* variable which was the only variable from the *learner group* variables to show a meaningful correlation with one of the L2 selves. As Table 5.7 shows, the group cohesiveness variable shows positive correlation with the *ideal L2 self* variable ( $r = .213^*$ ) as well as with the *intended L2 effort* variable ( $r = .221^*$ ). *Group cohesiveness* also showed a above average mean score  $M = 3.53$  which reflects the students' favourable evaluation of their peers and their readiness to work with them. However, while these results indicate that *group cohesiveness* is likely to enhance the students' L2 motivation and feed into the students' *ideal L2 self*, the qualitative data suggest that such a conclusion should be taken with caution in the current learning environment. This is because, as the qualitative data will show in the subsequent chapters, the individualistic nature of classroom learning in the current context, in which collaborative work was not often instructed or encouraged by the teacher, means that the students had little opportunity to develop such group cohesiveness and, hence, I suspect that the students may not have perceived *group cohesiveness* in its conventional conceptualization.

The only possibility through which I can see the positive contribution of group cohesiveness in the current context is through the cohesiveness which each student has developed with his/her seat partner rather than with the larger classroom group. As the qualitative data will show, most students developed close friendship with their partners with whom they shared the double-seated desk and with whom they were allowed to converse and work on learning tasks regardless of the teacher's instructions. Indeed, the students were rarely engaged in group interactions or activities, whereas the classroom

seating arrangement impelled them to engage in constant interaction with their seat partners and develop close friendships. This closeness included spending a great amount of time working together on learning tasks as well as spending time while off-task, whether inside or outside the classroom. It is this closeness which, according to Dörnyei (1994), is the key factor in developing stronger inter-member ties and creating important components of L2 motivation. In short, although the current results indicate that the group cohesiveness factor feeds into the students' ideal L2 selves, the only possible route through which this may occur is through the cohesiveness developed between pairs, because the lack of collaborative work and group interactions in the current context do not appear to offer other possible interpretations. I will return to the group cohesiveness factor in Chapter 7 in order to make more sense of the current data, while I move now to present and discuss the data concerning the *course material* variable.

#### **5.2.4 Correlation between L2 Self and Course Materials**

The *course materials* variable shows significant correlation with both the *ought-to L2 self* variable ( $r = .222^*$ ) and the *intended L2 effort* variable ( $r = .232^{**}$ ) while it shows no correlation with the *ideal L2 self* variable. This result indicates that the more students appreciate their course materials, the greater their intention to exert learning effort and the stronger their ought-to L2 selves. In fact, the frequency analysis results showed that the students' appreciation of their course materials was only moderate at  $M = 3.11$ . In the light of the significant correlation between the ought-to L2 self and the course materials factor, this means that the course materials factor was not perceived as an L2 motivating factor by the majority of the students, but for those who perceived it as positive, their perception tapped into their ought-to L2 selves. In L2 motivational

literature, interest in and satisfaction with course materials are prerequisites of intrinsic course-specific motives (Dörnyei, 1994) but in the current study, appraisal of course materials seems to fuel externally-orientated motivation, that is, the ought-to L2 self. The lack of students' appreciation of their course materials on one hand and the positive correlation between the course materials factor and the *intended L2 effort* on the other seem to support the view that commitment to the learning effort does not necessarily require positive appraisal of the course materials (Elliot & Dweck, 1988). However, in the current data, this support is only true when this commitment concerns bridging the gap towards the ought-to L2 self, but not the ideal L2 self. This may be interpreted by drawing on the qualitative data; because teachers constantly emphasized the importance of formal examinations and the students' learning satisfaction was likely to arise only from fulfilling assessment requirements and maintaining positive judgement of their ability, course materials became associated more with external influences and obligations to pass exams, that is, the ought-L2 self. In conclusion, the current results indicate that the course materials factor in the current L2 learning situation is more likely to strengthen the students' ought-to L2 selves rather than their ideal L2 selves, a conclusion which I will discuss in more depth as I move to the qualitative data in the subsequent chapters.

### **5.3 Summary**

The analysis and discussion presented in the first part of this chapter can be summed up in four points: First, similar to recent relevant studies, the current study's findings have

shown that both the ideal L2 self and the ought-to L2 self are valid and viable constructs in describing and defining the current participants' motivational dispositions. Second, the results show that the *international posture* factor plays a significant role in defining the participants' ideal L2 selves, appearing to surpass the role played by the *integrative* orientation which, in itself, was also found to fuel the participants' L2 selves. Third, the *promotion vs. prevention* distinction of instrumentality seems to be a valid way of describing the instrumental dimension of the current participants' L2 selves, with the former tapping into the ideal L2 self and the latter tapping into the ought-to L2 self. Fourth, *parental encouragement* does not seem to be a positive contributor to the current learners' L2 selves, which seem be a result of the local socio-cultural norms of learning in regard to the ideal L2 self and to conceptual issues in regard to the ought-to L2 self.

Overall, the analysis has shown that for the current learning situation, there are some striking similarities with some of the findings reported by existent studies in other international contexts, but it has also shown contrasting results that seem to be particular to the Libyan context.

In the second part of this chapter, the analysis of the results concerning the classroom-specific motivational factors characterizing the current L2 learning situation revealed the intricate relationship between these factors and the students' L2 selves. Although not all these factors were found to relate to the students' L2 selves, some of them did. To begin with, the students' perception of their *teacher competence* was found to be a positive contributor to their ideal L2 self, but only within the first-year group, which suggests that some dimensions of the L2 learning situation may play a more important role in shaping the students' L2 selves in the early stages of the classroom learning experiences

than in later stages. *Teacher-student rapport* was only related to the students' *ought-to L2 selves*, which can be a result of the fact that for the students, rapport with their teachers was associated only with the students' desire to please the teacher which may be genuine or prompted by the sense of duty and responsibility of showing respect for the teachers. In regard to the *learner group* variables, only the *group cohesiveness* factor was found to relate to the students' L2 selves by correlating with their *ideal L2 selves*, which seemingly reflected the cohesiveness that the individual students developed with their seat partners rather than with the whole classroom group. Finally, the students' appreciation of their course materials was found to fuel only their *ought-to L2 selves*. This could be the result of the dominance of formal assessment methods as an achievement measure in the current learning context, in which course materials become more associated with the responsibility to do well in the exams which, in turn, may correspond to the *ought-to L2 self* more than to the *ideal L2 self*, but this need not be always the case.

It is important to reiterate that whilst it is perhaps invidious to place too great significance on the findings of a single instrument and the perception of a small sample in a single institution, these findings are even more important because of the questions it has produced: What actually does make some factors (e.g., *international posture*) rather than others (e.g., *parental encouragement*) salient in defining the students' L2 selves in the current learning context? Why did the L2 learning situation factors appear to have only limited roles in shaping the students' *ideal L2 selves*? Do the students' L2 selves change as they progress through the learning stages? These questions will be taken into consideration alongside the original research questions as I move now to look at the qualitative data.





## ***Chapter Six***

### **The Representations of L2 Self Through the Qualitative Lenses**

In the previous chapter, I presented the quantitative data which revealed that the participants' L2 learning motivation can be defined by their future visions as future L2 users, and these visions generally incorporate integrative, instrumentality, and international posture orientations, in a similar way to other international learning contexts reported by previous studies. The aim of this chapter is to probe even deeper into the students' visions as future L2 users through the analysis of the qualitative data of individual learners, which is hoped to broaden my understanding of what actually represents the students' possible L2 selves. Understanding the nature of the individual participants' L2 self representations is crucial for the current study because I consider such understanding a prerequisite for examining how these future L2 visions relate to the participants' classroom learning experience, which is the focus of the subsequent chapter. To do so, three participants' qualitative data are analyzed and discussed in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into two parts: the first part presents the data for each of the three participants separately while the second part discusses the commonalities and individualities emerging from the data. In the first part, I will weave together data about each participant's learning history, present learning experience, and socio-cultural background which will then become a basis for a deeper inquiry into the three students' L2 selves through analysis and discussion of the data pertaining to the representations of their L2 selves. In the second part, I will consider key themes that emerged from the

analysis of the three participants' data in respect to the nature of their future L2 visions and their implications for subsequent analysis.

## **6.1 The Three English-Major Students**

All of the three participants who are at the centre of the forthcoming analysis were English-major students in an English-specialized secondary school in the town of Nalut in the north west of Libya, where they were born and lived. They all spoke Berber as their first language, Arabic as their second and medium of school instruction while English was the target language and their speciality subject of study. They all started learning English at the age of nine in the third grade in the primary school as a compulsory subject before they committed their academic future to English language by choosing to become English major students. The first participant whose data will be examined is *Hajer*.

### **6.1.1 Hajer**

#### ***Background***

Hajer was in her third and final year when I conducted the current study's fieldwork. She is the oldest child of her parents who are both academics: her father was a lecturer in mechanical engineering while her mother was a lecturer in computer science. She attended the primary school in Nalut until the age of nine. She then travelled with her family to the Czech Republic where she spent four years while her father was doing a PhD degree in Prague. There, she joined an international school for the period of four years before she returned home with her family.

In respect of her learning experience at the current school, Hajer's academic record which I was allowed to look at showed that she was a successful student with an excellent record; she finished top of the school in both her first and second years after she had earned top marks. During the first interview, Hajer made sure that she informed me about the fact that she had been used to being successful and being top of her class since she was at primary school:

*H: I have always been top of my class. It started since I was in the primary school; I did not mean to be the first but it just happens every year. It is not like I was studying hard at home because I am not the kind of student who studies hard at home; I rely on my understanding in the classes.*

*I: you mean even now in this school, you still do not study at home?*

*H: I only study before the exams and not in all subjects. If it was Grammar or Reading I would study a bit. I often understand and remember what the teachers teach in the classroom which helps me in the exams. If I do not understand I ask them.*

*(Interview 1, 28 September 2009)*

In the above interview excerpts, Hajer not only acknowledges her successful past experience but she also seems to project herself as a *gifted* student who has done very well without having to work hard, as she states above. As she says, she relies on her understanding in the class and this, according to my observation, was evident, through her consistent concentration on what the teacher said and more importantly in her constant asking of questions. When I began observing Hajer in her classes, my attention was first drawn to her as a result of her frequent asking of questions, some of which appeared to be typical clarification requests, but most of which appeared to be challenging and demanding extra information beyond the teacher's lesson plan. In an interview with Hajer's grammar teacher (11 November 2009), the teacher described Hajer by saying:

*Hajer is intensely inquisitive; she produces a constant stream of questions which sometimes take a lot of the class's time and which sometimes have no answers. She is clearly ahead of her peers in terms of her English knowledge and has no problem understanding her lessons.*

In addition to her constant asking of questions, Hajer also seemed to be constantly volunteering to answer questions asked by the teacher or read passages in the class. She particularly seemed to be very keen to read aloud in the class which she did in a clear and easy way to follow. She described reading in the class as her “favourite activity in the class” and she said that she “like(d) to read and be listened to”. This is in line with my initial impression of her as a student who aspired to maintain her *important* and *distinct self* through demonstrating her superior academic skills in her classroom.

Another important aspect of Hajer's learning experience at the current school was her active social life: she appeared to be a sociable girl, who was always in the company of friends, whether outside or inside the classroom, during the four-month period I observed her. The school's social specialist described her in an interview (1 December 2009) as an ‘extraverted’ and ‘sociable’ girl:

*I have known her since she joined the school three years ago; she has been always involved with different circles of friends. She is very popular because she has been involved in different events at the school level and she has always taken the leading role in these events.*

In line with the Social Specialist's statements, many of my field notes concerning Hajer show that she would spend a great deal of time engaging with her peers; on many occasions I watched her in the school-yard during the midday breaks being accompanied by a group of four or five students walking around the yard sharing drinks and food. Inside the class, Hajer was a member of a cluster of four students who were constantly

engaged in interactions and were a source of a great deal of noise in their classroom. As the social specialist's statements indicate, Hajer showed a great tendency towards leadership. Indeed, there were many occasions through which Hajer demonstrated her leading role, one of which took place as I walked in the school one morning; Hajer was standing with one of her classmates outside the Principal's office, waiting for permission to see the school Principal. I could not help asking her why she was standing there while all the students were in their classes; she told me that she wanted to ask the principal to talk to the Listening Comprehension teacher and try to persuade her to postpone the midterm exam because the students agreed that they were not ready for that exam. There were many other similar occasions on which Hajer acted on behalf of her classroom; during the first week of the first term, Hajer led a successful campaign to have their grammar teacher replaced after her classroom decided that that teacher lacked teaching competence.

As I briefly mentioned above, Hajer's privileged academic background, her successful learning experience, and her leading personality all seem to have contributed to constructing her perception of herself as an important and distinct person in both the academic and social spheres. This perception seems to have shaped the way she perceived her relationship to her learning environment, including her teachers and peers, which was evident in her striving to make herself visible and heard, and take the leading role in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. As we will see in the following section, this perception has shaped the way she has envisaged her future possibilities as an L2 user.

## **Hajer's Future L2 Self Visions**

*I chose to major in English because I always liked English. Frankly, I had a choice between majoring in English or in medical science because I liked 'life science' as a school subject too and also because I earned top marks in both subjects in my final year of basic education [ninth grade]. I decided to join English because medical college at the university would take so many years after I finish this school.*

*(Interview 1, 28 September 2009)*

This interview excerpt shows Hajer's response to my question concerning the reason she chose to major in English. Although she says that she always liked English, she also admits that English was not her only priority subject and she chose it over medical sciences based on the factor of time. This indicates that the academic domain was not as much important as the end-state career, as also appears in the following excerpts from the same interview:

*I: you mean that you thought of becoming a practising medical doctor?*

*H: no, I was thinking of teaching after that. You can teach with a medical degree, can't you?*

*I: of course you can. So you want to become a teacher in the future?*

*H: yes, but not a school teacher. I want to become a university lecturer.*

*I: why a university lecturer and not a school teacher?*

*H: I do not want to become a school teacher in a classroom packed with noisy students for the rest of my life.*

*I: how is that different from university lecturer?*

*H: it is very different. Lecturing is different than teaching; you lecture in big theatres with more mature students. People will respect you more if you are a university lecturer and you work with doctors and professors.*

What is clear from Hajer's interview excerpt is that whether she had majored in English or medical sciences, the underlying future desired self appeared to be *career-oriented* as

a future university lecturer, which seems to be the broader vision that encapsulated her future career possibilities.

This underlying desired future-self that Hajer envisioned as a university lecturer teaching in a big lecturing theatre and lecturing ‘more mature’ students appears to reflect more than an academically oriented self. There is a sense of strong social incentive in addition to the academic ones. This can be seen in Hajer’s statements as she describes how she envisioned the university lecturer self; a university lecturer who is *respected by people* and being a member of the academic elite. Moreover, this university lecturer self was envisioned through not only a lecturer’s image at a workplace but also through a particular lifestyle as Hajer indicates in the following interview excerpt:

*I: what about money? Isn’t that one reason you want to become a university lecturer and not a school teacher?*

*H: [laughs] of course I want to earn more money. Frankly, it is more than money, I like my father’s lifestyle; I like to have as many books as him and spend time reading and preparing for lectures at home and leave home in the morning with two bags.*

*(interview 1, 28 September 2009)*

From the excerpt above, Hajer has seemingly constructed an image of a university lecturer’s life at home through observing her father working at home and living a typical academic life which has clearly appealed to her. This seems to strengthen her future career self and adds more desired incentives to this career-oriented ideal L2 vision.

It seems reasonable to argue that Hager’s career-oriented self as a university lecturer in the light of the social incentives associated with that self reflects what can be described as an idealized *instrumental* self that is *promotionally* oriented. It can also be argued that

the social dimension of this self provides the foundation for the academic L2 self. It is worth stressing here that the strength of the social dimension of Hajer's vision of her future career-self should not come as a surprise when we consider her current and past experience which shows that she has consistently maintained and sought others' respect by being a top achieving student. These social incentives seem to reflect the values that Hajer has internalized and have become an integral part of the way she perceived her current self and envisioned her future L2 self. In other words, Hajer's desired ideal self as a university lecturer in the L2 seems to incorporate a vision of an idealized social self that overlaps with the idealized academic L2 self.

Another dimension of the L2 self that can be discerned from Hajer's data is her *feared future self*. I have already presented some data above in which Hajer states that she wanted to be a university lecturer and *not* a school teacher:

*I do not want to become as a school teacher in a class packed with noisy student for the rest of my life.*

This statement indicates a sign of a *feared* or *undesired* L2 self that Hajer wanted to avoid. This fear of ending up as a school teacher can be understood in the light of the socio-cultural norms characterizing Hajer's broad society in which a school teacher is by *default* a profession that is socially approved and desired for females with only few who decide to challenge these norms. This has deep religious and cultural roots which shape the gender rules in terms of gender mixing at the work place. Hajer's ideal future self, however, is clearly at odds with the default school teacher self because of the undesired social attributes, the financial incentives and the lifestyle associated with the image of a school teacher. In a later interview with Hajer (20 November 2009) and when the social



aspect of her future self began to become clearer to me, I asked her again why she did not want to become a school teacher:

*H: nobody likes teaching and nobody respects school teachers. I think it is hard work and a boring job.*

*I: where did you get these ideas from?*

*H: It is what people say and what teachers themselves say.*

*I: Are you saying that there is no way that you become a teacher?*

*H: I will try not to be. Everyone expects the students in this school to become teachers. If we will all become teachers then it does not make a difference whether I am top of the school or not.*

After examining Hajer's statements, it can be argued that, to some extent, Hajer is motivated by her feared self. This is because the image of a school teacher Hajer describes reflects attributes that she does not want to associate with in the future. Some of these attributes concern undesired work conditions like long hours and inadequate financial rewards while other attributes concern undesired social consequences such as lack of respect. These attributions seem to be in stark contrast with the attributions that Hajer associated with her future ideal self as a university lecturer. Her statement in the last interview excerpt above indicates that her awareness of the fact that she was a higher achiever than her peers made her believe that she deserves to be rewarded with a distinct future self. This feared (or undesired) L2 self seems in stark contrast with the conceptualization of feared *self* as a school failure or a drop out as I explained in previous chapters. I will return to this point later in the chapter.

Another representative feature of Hajer's L2 self concerns her *international posture* orientation. As was mentioned in Hajer's background information section above, she

spent four years in Prague in the Czech Republic where she studied in an international school between the ages of 8 -12 years. When I asked her what she thought about life abroad she said:

***H:** they [people in Prague] were different, their culture and lifestyle is different and their life is organized and people respect the law in the street.*

***I:** was that all you liked about life abroad?*

***H:** I liked many other things. I liked my school, my classmates were from different countries and we were using English and the Czech language to speak to each other. We [her family] used to go out every weekend shopping or visiting places.*

***I:** were you talking to people, I mean local people or others outside the school?*

***H:** yes but only with children because but I was only a child. It was difficult in the beginning because I was only able to speak Berber and Arabic but after the first year I learned English and I started talking to the others and liked to be with children at the school and elsewhere.*

*(Interview 2, 14 October 2009)*

As the interview excerpt shows, Hajer experienced the international setting when she was a child which may be different from the experience of an adult. Her responses, however, suggests that she still had a positive attitude towards the *international community* of which she once was a member and in which L2 played a central role. In an attempt to find out whether this positive attitude was incorporated into her future L2 self, I asked her if she wanted to travel or live abroad in the future to which she replied:

***H:** I would like to spend some years studying abroad but not to work or live for a long time because I prefer to work here.*

***I:** any particular reason?*

*H: I do not know, I just never thought of living or working abroad. I only thought of studying abroad for some years if I get a scholarship.*

*I: what attracts you to the idea of studying abroad?*

*H: I'd like to try the university life abroad and I like to be with students from different parts of the world. I went with my father to his university many times when he was studying in Prague and I liked the atmosphere and many things I saw.*

*(Interview 2, 14 October 2009)*

What the above interview excerpt shows is that Hajer only envisioned herself having a study-abroad experience and hoped to engage in intercultural communication with others and enjoy other aspects of life in university abroad. Hajer's desire to live the international experience again, however, seemed to be represented only through a study-abroad vision because, as she states, she never thought of living or working abroad and preferred to live and work at home. This suggests that her desired internationally-postured self is not an end-state vision of a future self but, rather, a *temporary* self she wanted to experience whose features clearly seemed to be based on her real past experience in Prague.

The last dimension of Hajer's L2 self system to discuss is what I will term the *short-term L2 selves* which Hajer sought to materialize through achieving school success and earning top grades. Finishing top of the school was Hajer's nearest future goal because her sight was set on the study-abroad scholarship that the government has systematically been awarding to those who finish top of their schools. This came to light when I asked Hajer how she would pursue her higher education and become a university lecturer:

*H: I am hoping to finish top of the school and win the scholarship in order to pursue my higher education. That is why I am focusing on my exams and trying to earn the maximum marks more this year.*

*I: Do you have a good chance to win the scholarship?*

*H: I think I do have a good chance because I have always finished top and I think I will have to finish top even if there is no scholarship as I have always done. I think this year there is a competition because of the scholarship but I am confident that I will finish top.*

*(Interview 2, 14 October 2009)*

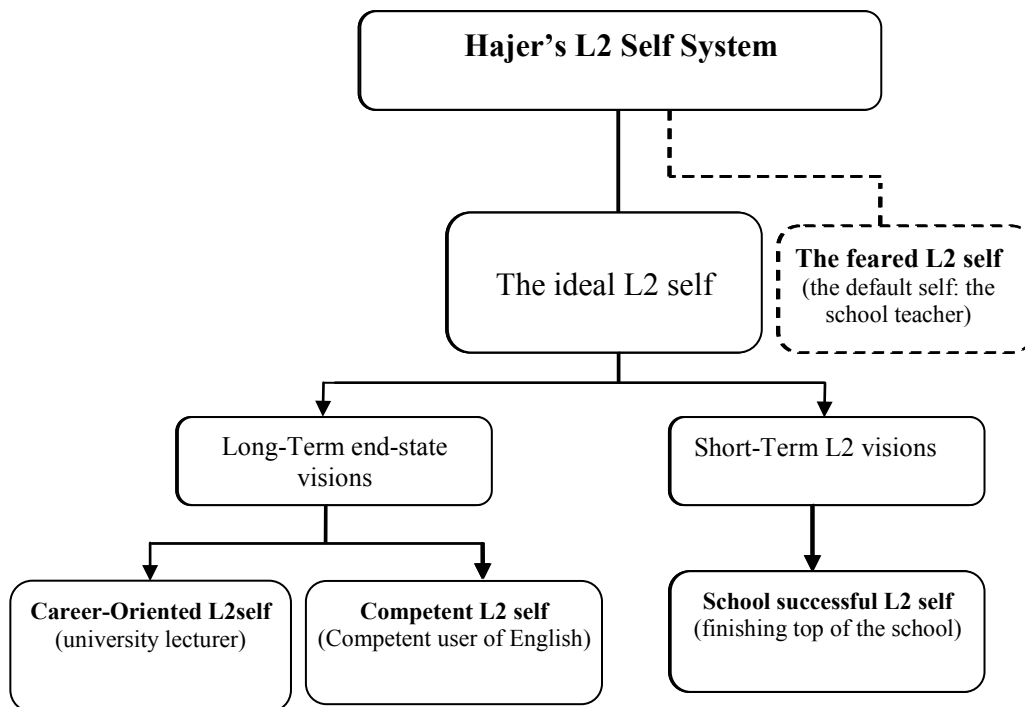
The goal of earning the scholarship clearly represents the instrumental goal that would eventually lead Hajer to achieve her end-state self as a university lecturer. In other words, school success and earning top grades represent Hajer's *instrumental short-term* L2 self and the path through which she can materialize her higher education aspiration and ultimately become the university lecturer. Her striving for earning top grades, then, indicates that Hajer's learning is driven by a promotionally-oriented instrumental L2 self that fuels both her short-term vision as a school successful self and the long-term career vision.

However, as the following chapter will show, Hajer also aspired to become a competent L2 speaker; this was not particularly related to her instrumental visions of L2 but, rather, she hoped to achieve effective L2 competence as an accredited future L2 professional who is simply competent at English. Indeed, this vision as a future L2 competent person emerged as she was engaged in assessing her three-year learning experience at the current school in comparison with the learning expectations she had when she joined this school. We will see in the following chapter how this vision was one of the multiple future visions that Hajer used as criteria against which to evaluate her learning achievement/success at the current school. While this will be explained in detail in the next chapter, I will move now to discuss the data of the second participant after I sum up Hajer's data.

## Summary of Hajer's L2 Future Visions

To sum up Hajer's representations of her L2 self system I sketched Figure 6.1 below to illustrate the complex structure of these representations.

Figure 6.1: Representations of Hajer's L2 Self System



Starting from the top, the above figure shows that Hajer's L2 self representations fall within two main constructs; ideal L2 self and feared L2 self. The ideal L2 self is represented through two types of visions: long-term L2 visions (or end-state visions) and short-term visions. The long term visions incorporate the career-oriented L2 vision which is *university lecturer* as well as *competent L2 user*. The short-term visions incorporate the *school successful vision* in which she poses as the *top* student in the school. At the top right appears the feared L2 self which is represented through the default *school teacher vision*. This dimension of Hajer's L2 self system appears in a

dotted square because it did not seem to be represented via a strong vision in her L2 self system as it appears to be overridden by the strength of her idealized L2 visions.

The complexity of the structure of Hajer's L2 self system is undoubtedly unique to her as a person whose micro and macro L2 learning situations were necessarily different from those of her peers, as we will see from the data of the second participant, that is, *Nada*.

### **6.1.2 Nada**

#### ***Background***

The second participant, Nada, was also a third-year student and shared Hajer the same classroom as Hajer. Nada was the youngest child of a retired bank manager father and a housewife mother. My attention was first drawn to Nada when I observed her classroom during the first week of the fieldwork and noticed that she was often actively engaged in her classroom learning but this engagement reflected signs of challenging behaviour such as resisting her teachers' authority. On some occasions, I also noticed that she withdrew from any kind of engagement and remained silent, as will be described later in this section and in the following chapter. Nada's behaviour posed a question as to whether it was related to or influenced by particular L2 selves.

A look at Nada's academic record at the current school revealed that she was one of the top five students in the third-year group. However, in the second interview, Nada was keen to make it clear that being among the top group was not her priority as the interview excerpt below shows:

*I: you seem to be doing well in your study. I was told that you finished fifth last year. Is that true?*

*N: Yes, true. But I am not the type of student who wants to be at the top. What is the point of gaining high marks if you still cannot speak English? If it is about high marks, I would have chosen an easier subject than English. I joined this school to learn to speak English not to earn high marks.*

*I: so what is your priority then?*

*N: I just want to learn the language and speak it well.*

*(Interview 2, 20 October 2009)*

In a philosophical style, Nada often portrayed herself as a learner who joined the school only to learn to speak English. During the interviews, Nada often led the course of the interview by her critical attitude to her learning situation as the above interview excerpts may indicate. The statement “*I just want to learn the language*” was a frequent one that Nada liked to remind me of during the interviews, which she often linked to her primary school experience during which she had developed her interest in English:

*N: I liked English since I was in the primary school. I liked my primary English teacher who taught me in fifth and sixth grade who made me like English. I did very well in English in the primary school and always had high marks.*

*I: did you do well only in English or did you generally do well?*

*N: I have always done very well in the school in all subjects but English was my favourite subject and my English teacher was my favourite teacher. She made me want to speak English as she was speaking it.*

*(Interview 1, 29 September 2009)*

Consistent with her statements in the above interview excerpts, Nada was eager to reiterate that she had come to the current school with a desire to learn English that she developed at an early age and she hoped to nurture this desire by choosing to major in English. She portrayed her primary-school teacher, who taught her for two years, as a role model that she wanted to imitate, especially in the way she spoke English.

After observing Nada in a few classes, I began to notice how she was engaged in different and sometimes even contrasting learning behaviours, especially her classroom engagement which switched from full engagement to complete withdrawal. I noticed that she was sometimes eager to volunteer to answer questions and work on tasks and she even corrected her peers' errors. She particularly seemed to be eager to participate when the activity required the students to work on the board in front of the students. However, as I mentioned above, part of Nada's classroom behaviour appeared to be challenging, which was sometimes portrayed in a form of resistance to teachers' authority or even refusal to participate in classroom activities. One episode through which Nada seemed to demonstrate such behaviour took place in her grammar class (23 November 2009); the teacher started the class by writing some notes on the board when Nada asked her<sup>1</sup>:

*N: <Berber> are we supposed to write that down?*

*T: <English> yes.*

*N: <Berber> what if I did not bring my notebook?*

*T: <Arabic> leave the class*

The teacher replied to Nada without looking back at her, showing little interest in Nada's question, which suggested (to me at least) that she knew that Nada's question was not genuine. In fact, this was the case, because I noticed that Nada had actually brought her notebook. This incident shows an example of what appeared to be unexplained behaviour through which Nada often interrupted the flow of her classes. Other examples of Nada's challenging behaviours were exhibited through resistance to her teachers' authority. An example of this resistance can be found in Nada's

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<sup>1</sup>The two marks < > mark the beginning of an utterance in a particular language, e.g. <Berber> marks the beginning of an utterance in Berber



objection to exam arrangements which her teachers made. For instance, when her Reading Teacher told the class that they would have their monthly test on Wednesday the following week, Nada was the first and only student to object:

*N: <English> we cannot, teacher. <Arabic> we have a Listening Comprehension exam on Tuesday.*

*T: <Arabic> I cannot move it to another day; all tests should be completed by next week.*

*N: <Berber> but there is no time to prepare.*

*T: <Arabic> start preparing from today.*

There were many similar episodes in which Nada was the first to raise her voice in disapproval and would try to impose her own opinion and argue her case. It was through such behaviour that some of her teachers, to a certain extent, constructed a negative perception of her classroom behaviour, as may be gathered from her Conversation Teacher's comments in the following interview excerpt (26 November 2009):

*Nada can be sometimes a difficult student. She is mostly doing very well but sometimes her behaviour is difficult to understand and deal with. She can be active and responsive but sometimes she does not take her class seriously and instead makes you feel that she does not want to be in the class.*

As the teacher's opinion shows, lack of interest and lack of seriousness are what Nada's behaviour sometimes seems to reflect, which I noticed on many occasions during classroom observations. One example that shows Nada's apparent lack of interest took place when the Grammar Teacher asked the class to work individually and prepare a *weekend plan* which was meant to help the students understand and practice verbs used to express action plans, which they had just studied. After the students spent some time completing the task, the teacher asked Nada to read her plans aloud to the class:

*T: <English> what are your plans, Nada?*

*N: <Arabic> I did not write anything, teacher.*

*T: <English> why?*

*N: <Arabic> because I do not have plans for this weekend.*

It is important to stress that such behaviour was only one aspect of Nada's classroom learning behaviour, as she seemed to move between being positively responsive to her classroom learning and being disruptive. Indeed, it was this particular learning behaviour which qualified Nada as a participant for this study, because I was interested to know what could possibly underlie her behaviour, a question which is investigated in the following chapter after I have provided a description of her L2 self system in the following section.

### ***Nada's Future L2 Visions***

In respect of the representation of her future L2 self, understanding Nada's L2 visions proved to be challenging, because she seemed unable to articulate a clear vision as a future user of English that can be associated with some career aspirations. Instead, the only future L2 vision that Nada made clear was a desired fluent English speaker with no instrumental value attached to this vision. With an assumption that an English-major student would have at least a rough image reflecting future career aspirations, I asked Nada what she wanted to become after she have graduated with an English degree:

*N: I do not know what I want to do. I only want to be good in English and speak it well.*

*I: let's say you have graduated with good language skills; you can speak well and you have good grammar knowledge, in what way will you use these skills?*

*N: you mean a job?*

*I: a job or something similar?*

*N: I do not know. I am not thinking about teaching but I will have to think then. If I manage to become competent and fluent in English as you have said, then that would be a big achievement.*

*(Interview 1, 29 September 2009)*

In line with my questions in the above interview excerpt, I repeatedly attempted in later interviews to elicit information from Nada about how she wanted to employ English speaking skills that she aspired to possess in her future career life but she was unable to articulate such vision and persisted that she “*only*” wanted to become a fluent speaker of English. Of course, my repeated attempts over the course of our interviews were prompted by the fact that she was an English-major student and assumed to aspire for a career. Her consistent responses suggested that she was truly led only by the aspiration to learn to speak English, especially with the fact that her statements were often infused with the words “*enjoyment*” and “*hobby*” when she talked about her learning. This enjoyment of learning English appeared to be linked to Nada’s past enduring interest in English rather than to her experience at the current school. As the following chapter will reveal, her experience at the current school seems to have provided her with little sense of enjoyment compared with her earlier experience of English learning. This might explain the fact that she sometimes appeared to take her learning with little responsibility and engage in challenging and, sometimes, playful classroom behaviour.

However, the lack of a future career vision does not mean that Nada did not consider possibilities of future career because she stated in the interview excerpt above that she did not want to become a teacher. Although she, similar to Hajer, expressed resentment towards becoming a school teacher, she did not appear to have developed an alternative future self that would replace the undesired default school teacher vision. As the

undesired school teacher became something of interest in my data, I revisited this issue in a later interview with Nada (23 November 2009):

*I: you said before that you did not want to become a school teacher, do you think you might change your mind?*

*N: I never thought of becoming a teacher. I know people expect me to become a teacher because it is the only job people believe is suitable for girls but it does not attract me at all.*

*I: there are other things you can work, a translator, for example.*

*N: you know our culture and traditions; people do not accept women to work in offices. I know that there are some women working in offices but not everyone can do that.*

*I: would your family object if you want to work in an office?*

*N: of course, but it is me who would not work in an office because you know people and what they think.*

In this interview excerpt, Nada gives another reason as to why she was not thinking about future careers; her statements above seem to reveal constraints on her *imagination* of possible career alternatives to the undesired school teacher. In other words, her ability of imagination seemed to be constrained by her perception of the cultural and the traditional constraints regarding which careers are seen as appropriate and acceptable for women in her society. It is important to mention, however, that whereas this seems to be the case in Nada's thinking, this does not mean that all the other girls were inhibited from considering future possibilities that would challenge the dominant socio-cultural norms, as we can after all see in the case of Hajer. Throughout her interviews, Nada showed high sensitivity to the social rules and realities shaping her social environment and, consequently, shaping her perception of her future career possibilities. This seems to be the case when I attempted to understand how she positioned her English learning in respect to the *international* value of learning English as the following interview excerpt shows:

*I: you have said many times that you wanted to be fluent in English, do you think that you will be speaking with foreigners here or abroad?*

*N: if I have to, but where would I meet foreigners?*

*I: with tourists who visit this town, or if you travelled or studied abroad in the future?*

*N: I do not even talk to the local people whom I do not know here. I would like to travel or study abroad but I do not think I will because it is not easy. You never know, I may travel abroad one day.*

*(Interview 2, 20 October 2009)*

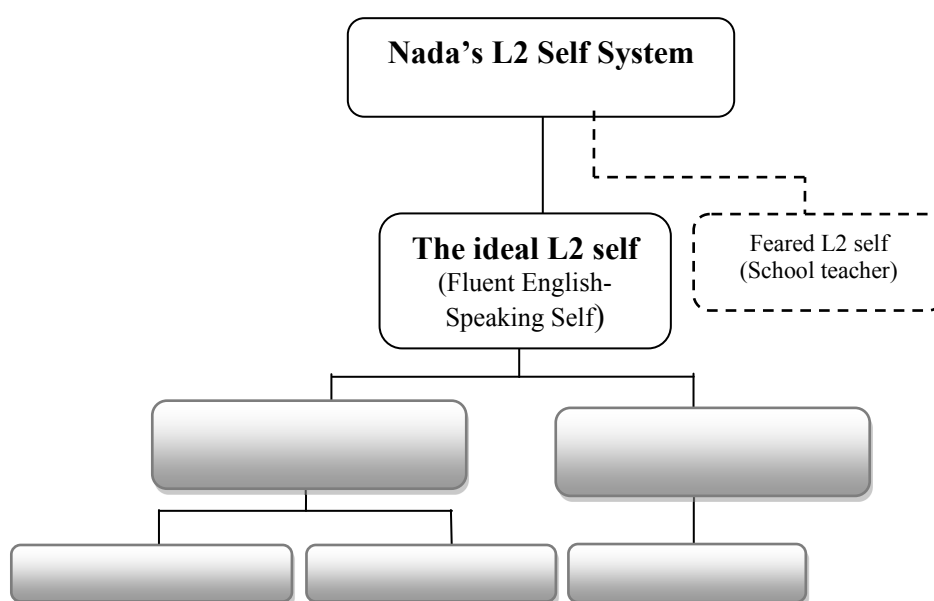
Nada's statements suggest that although she may have valued travelling or studying abroad, the international posture did not seem to be part of her thinking about her future. She tended to ground the possibilities of experiencing the international posture in what her socio-cultural environment made possible, conventional or acceptable. Nada's data do not seem to support the view that a possible self is theoretically liberating and less constrained by the social realities which restrict the *here* and *now* self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). This is because the social constraints in Nada's society seem to have shaped the way she perceived the likelihood of what could she become in the future. It is not clear, however, whether the absence of a career-based future vision in Nada's L2 self system was purely influenced by the constraints in her socio-cultural environment or by the lack of an inherent desire to become something in the future in the first place.

### ***Summary of Nada's L2 Visions***

As the above discussion shows, Nada has represented her L2 self system as being solely guided by a fluent English-speaking self with no other vision regarding the context in which this competent L2 self will be activated other than the joy of speaking fluent English. Using Hajer's model of L2 self representation as a template for Nada's data in

Figure 6.2 below, we can see how the two participants' L2 self systems differ. Whereas Hajer's complex L2 self incorporated different visions representing different future possibilities as an L2 user, Nada's L2 self seems to be embedded in a single idealized future vision as a fluent English speaker. The two participants' representations, however, shared the same feared L2 vision as a school teacher (i.e., the default self as emerged in the current context).

Figure 6.2: Representations of Nada's L2 Self System



What is important in Nada's data, however, is the strength of her desired fluent English-speaking vision. Regardless of the factors that seem to have prohibited her from constructing and, hence, articulating a clear career L2 self, it would be a valuable line of enquiry to examine how an L2 self that is constructed through a unitary L2 vision relates to her L2 learning. In the following section, I will turn to look at the data for the third participant (Malak) whose learning experience was different from Hajer and Nada's in

the sense that she was just embarking on her secondary-school experience when she became a key participant in this study.

### 6.1.3 Malak

#### ***Background***

As I have just mentioned, Malak was a first-year student who had just become an English-major student when she took part in this study. In the first interview, Malak told me that she came from a family none of whose members had made it to a college-level education and she wanted to be the first to break the norm. During my interviews with her, she often ended up talking about her family which indicated to me that she was quite sensitive to her family influence, especially when she expressed her concerns about her family's attitude towards her learning:

*M: When I tell them [her family] that I want to go to college after I graduate from this school, they do not take me seriously and none of them encourages me. All my brothers and sisters did not go to a university and I do not have to be like them, I want to be the first to make to the college and succeed*

*I: why do you think they are not taking you seriously?*

*M: because I have not been good enough at school especially in English.*

*I: if you think that you are not good enough in English then what made you choose to major in English?*

*M: because I like English more than any other subject and I think that I can improve if I have good teachers and I work hard.*

*(Interview 1, 01 October 2009)*

In her responses, Malak revealed that she had joined the current school without a prior successful learning experience, in contrast to the cases of Hajer and Nada. Her statements also indicate that it was her past experience which made her family members

doubt her academic ability and did not take her ambitious future plans seriously. In respect to her participation in this study, it was Malak's classroom performance which first drew my attention to her. As I observed her class, I noticed that she was constantly eager to speak and engage but she clearly appeared to struggle to match her peers' level of classroom performance in regard to providing correct answers or reading in a clear manner. She also seemed to show difficulty in comprehending her lesson materials; she was repeatedly asking the teachers to repeat what they had said and requesting clarifications, which were most frequent in her grammar classes. In an interview with her Grammar Teacher (26 November 2009), the teacher described Malak by saying:

*She often lags behind her peers and I had to repeat a lot of what I say to her which makes me think that she does not pay attention to me when I talk. The good thing about her is that she desperately wants to participate and she does not feel embarrassed to ask and say that she did not understand.*

In fact, what the teacher referred at as *lack of attention* in Malak's classroom behaviour seemed to me more as difficulty in comprehending information and a struggle to compete with her peers' performance. Malak, indeed, was often the first to ask questions, refer to something in the lesson she could not understand, or interrupt the teacher in the middle of the lesson to ask for repetition or clarification. However, Malak's low ability to comprehend her lesson materials was not as interesting in her data as was the fact that, as the her teacher states above, she was not discouraged from trying again and again to volunteer to answer questions, despite the fact that she was often unable to provide correct answers. After observing Malak in a grammar class (15 October 2009) in which she volunteered to answer two questions, both of which she answered incorrectly, I wrote down in my field notes:



*I wonder from where she gets this motivation to participate, she just answered an easy question incorrectly which was corrected by another student and she pushed the teacher to allow her answer another question which she answered incorrectly again.*

My note was, as it indicates, influenced by the assumption that frequent incorrect answers are likely to lead a learner to avoid volunteering to answer questions again, which obviously was not the case for Malak. This, of course, is not an inquiry I want to pursue in this chapter but it does describe an important aspect of Malak's learning profile and her motivated learning engagement at the current school, and sheds some light on the way she goes about her learning.

Another feature of Malak's classroom learning engagement concerns the way she managed her classroom *language* behaviour. Being a Berber-native speaker who spoke Arabic as a second language, she did not seem to be competent in Arabic as were most of her peers. During classroom observations, I noted that Malak struggled to speak fluent Arabic which was the medium of instruction in her classroom, which made her consistently address her teachers in Berber unless she was explicitly told by them to switch to Arabic. Speaking Berber in the classroom is ideologically associated with a lack of discipline and bad classroom behaviour. Malak's teachers reacted in different ways to her use of Berber, ranging from complete tolerance to an explicit telling off. When I asked Malak's Grammar Teacher in an interview (23 November 2009) about this particular matter of Malak's classroom behaviour, she said:

*It is a problem, I know she cannot speak Arabic as good as the others but if she does not try she will never learn. This is why I sometimes force her to speak Arabic. Another thing is that if I let her speak Berber I cannot ask the others not to do the same.*

As the interview excerpt shows, speaking Berber is considered to be undesired classroom behaviour, which the teacher referred to as a problem. For Malak, her relative incompetence in Arabic indicated the presence of another difficulty she had to deal with in her classroom learning in addition to the fact that she lagged behind her peers in terms of academic performance. These difficulties in Malak's learning, however, were coupled with her persistent engagement in classroom learning as her Grammar teacher stated above and as my observation of her also indicates. This seems, to me at least, to be an interesting case in regard to the role of Malak's L2 self system in particular, and the underlying psychological factors in general, that have kept her motivated to learn despite these difficulties and I will consider these issues next.

### ***Malak's Future L2 Visions***

Exploring Malak's future goals and aspirations which constructed her L2 self system uncovered more than one desired future L2 vision. As early as the first interview, Malak made it clear that she hoped to become a translator and interpreter and work for an international oil company as it shows in the following interview excerpt:

*M: I want to become a translator and work in an international oil company.*

*I: that sounds good. What has attracted you to this particular job?*

*M: many things. Oil companies are good to work for. They provide opportunities to travel abroad and training courses in addition to the good payment.*

*I: that means that you will be working in Tripoli or in some oil fields in the desert, can you do that?*

*M: not in the desert but I would like to work in Tripoli.*

*(Interview 1, October 2009)*

Working for an international oil company as a translator or a communication coordinator has been a common attractive career option for those who possess sufficient English skills in Libya. These companies often provide training for new recruits by sending them abroad for training courses. From Malak's statements, it seems that it was such opportunities which attracted her to this job. Malak mentioned that she had two relatives who graduated with English degrees and worked for oil companies, which seems to be the source which fuelled her desire to follow the same career path and made her perceive this future vision as plausible to achieve, as she explains:

*I: what do your relatives tell you?*

*M: one of them spent three years working for an oil company here before he was sent to the UK to do an Oil and Gas Management degree. He rarely visits us but when he does I keep asking him about his job.*

*I: what kind of stories does he tell you?*

*M: different stories about his work or about his life when he lived in the UK and the people he works with.*

*I: Is that what you want to do in the future?*

*M: this is how I dream [laughs]. I like to travel and visit different places and meet different people and discover different cultures.*

*(Interview2, 22 October 2009).*

The above interview was the second interview I had with Malak, during which I began to uncover the strength of the internationally-postured self in her career-vision. She was clearly drawn to a translation job in an international oil company because she saw it as the path to travel or study abroad and work in international environment. She also sought information from others to feed into and enhance her desired internationally-postured self by asking others who lived the real experience, such as her relative. It is this desire to become an *international citizen* which Malak seems to have brought with her to her classroom, where she expects it to grow and eventually materialize.

On another level, listening to Malak describing her desired career self immediately prompted the issue of the plausibility of her working for an oil company away from home, which seems to be an ambition that challenges her society's socio-cultural norms, as I explained in my discussion of Nada's data. In fact, I hesitated in the second interview to bring about this particular point because I thought by doing so I could undermine her hope and motivation to achieve her ambitious plans. However, I was keen to know whether she was aware of these challenges and whether they were incorporated into her thinking about her future, so I did eventually ask her:

*I: what does your family say about your plan to work for an international company in Tripoli?*

*M: I have not told them yet. As I told you before, they do not think that I can be something and that is why I do not want to tell them. When I told them that I wanted to go to a college after I have finished this school, they did not take me seriously. My older brother said: 'wait until you pass your first year in this school and then think of going to the college'. My two brothers are the worst in the family who always tell me that I am not good enough. My sister thinks that English is too difficult for me. I cannot tell them about my plans because of that. I want first to finish this school successfully then I will prove to them that I can do it.*

*(Interview 3, 17 November 2009)*

Malak's response did not seem to satisfy the intention of my question but it does show how important her desire was to transform the current social image that was constructed for her by others as an incompetent student into a successful academic future self. This, in turn, indicates that succeeding in her academic challenge was her first hurdle to jump before she would be able to materialize her other dreams of becoming a translator in a company and living the international experience.

Malak's data show that two emergent visions: a short-term ideal vision as a successful academic self which incorporates a strong social component because of her desire to prove her self-worth within her immediate social circle. Materializing this vision would consequently lead her to materialize the second vision which is the long-term and end-state ideal vision as an internationally-postured self. The latter vision appears to overlap with the vision of a translator in an international company but it also seems to be the superior idealized future vision.

Another important dimension of Malak's data concerns the feared L2 self. Admittedly, Malak's data have made this dimension more important than the previous two participants because of the discrepancy that seemed to exist between her desired academic self and her actual academic self. In the following interview excerpt I asked Malak about her future fears:

*I: do you worry sometimes that you might fail?*

*M: sometimes I do especially when I cannot understand anything the teachers say while the other students can.*

*I: what will happen if you fail?*

*M: failing means I wasted a year and I have to repeat the first full year. I do not think that I can study another full year. It would be so embarrassing because if I failed it means that that people were right when they said that I could not succeed in English and I should have chosen an easier option.*

*I: you mean your family?*

*M: my family and many other people.*

*(Interview 3, 17 November 2009)*

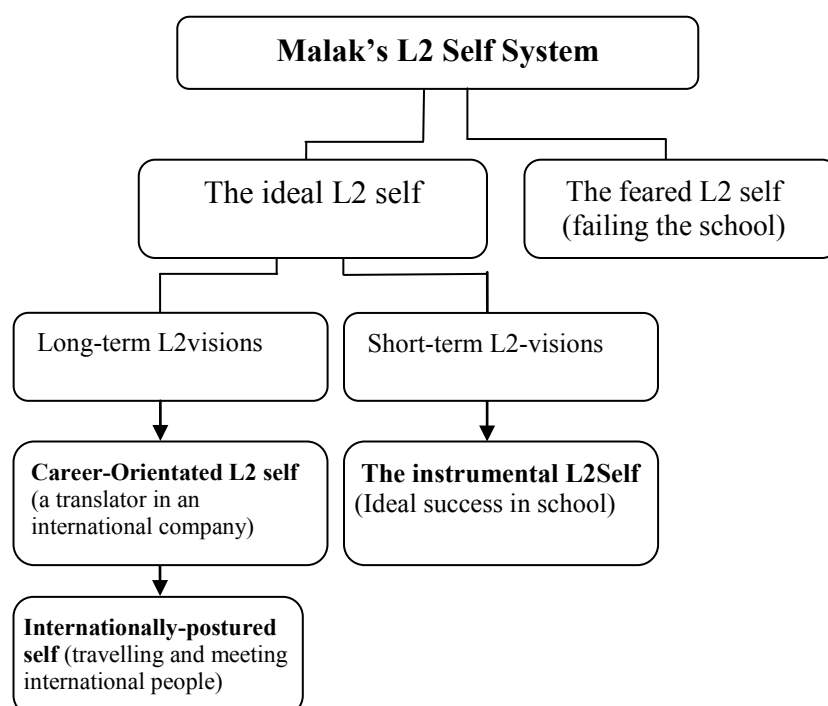
These statements bring to surface a clearly defined feared L2 self that reflects, unlike in the case of Hajer and Nada, a fear of becoming a failed academic self. This fear seems to

come from Malak’s awareness of the fact that she sometimes lagged behind her peers in terms of her academic performance, as she states above, and this has activated her image of feared L2 self. We can see how she describes this self with some additional details: an embarrassed self who failed to rise to the challenge she agreed to when she defied the odds and the low expectations expressed by her significant others. However, the fact that she wanted to move away from this feared self and approach the self at the other end of her L2 self system spectrum (i.e., the ideal L2 self) indicates a potential positive influence of this feared L2 self in regard to her motivated learning behaviour.

### **Summary of Malak’s L2 Visions**

Diagram 6.3 illustrates the structure of Malak’s L2 self system that has been described in the above section. As the diagram shows, three salient ideal L2 visions represent Malak’s desired future L2 visions. These visions are divided into long- and short-term visions.

Figure 6.3: Representations of Malak's L2 Self System



Under the long-term visions appear the two end-state visions that Malak aspires to become, that is, the career-based vision as a translator in an international oil company which appears in the diagram above the other end-state vision which is an internationally-postured-self. The hierarchical order is based on the contingency factor, that is, the international postured-self is placed below because it is contingent on the achievement of the career-oriented self although the former reflects Malak's central desired L2 vision. Under the short-term selves appear the other ideal L2 vision which reflect the school successful self. Although this self is termed as the *instrumental school self*, I included it under the ideal L2 self because it appeared to reflect Malak's desire to transform her underachieving self to an ideal successful academic ideal as I discussed earlier. Finally, the diagram also shows the feared L2 self as a distinct vision within the broader L2 self system of Malak. This vision holds features of future-self that are in stark contrast with Malak's idealized L2 self, reflecting fear of school failure and public humiliation.

Now that I have provided a detailed account of the three participants' representations of their L2 self systems, let me outline the main themes concerning the theoretical implications of these findings and the possible ways in which these implications may relate to the discussion in the forthcoming chapter.

## **6.2 Discussion**

I have already discussed above the main findings concerning the three participants' representations of their L2 self systems. However, in the rest of this chapter I will recap the main points under two main themes. The core argument around which the current discussion revolves is the multidimensionality and complexity of the L2 self system, which was only possible to uncover by employing qualitative methods. The discussion below is mostly limited to the data concerning the two participants, Hajer and Malak, whose L2 self visions were represented through multidimensional and complex structures of future visions.

### **6.2.1 The L2 Self System as a Complex and Hierarchical System**

The data and the discussion presented in this chapter suggest that while for some learners the future L2 self may be envisioned as a single L2 vision, for others it may be represented as a multidimensional structure of complex and overlapping L2 visions. Similar to the possible selves that Markus and Nurius (1986) describe, the visions associated with L2 self can vary according to valence, temporal placement, level of elaboration, and accessibility. What can be gathered from the current findings is that the students come to their classroom with multiple and complex desired L2 visions that are not just any collection of desired life roles that they can imagine, but visions reflecting personally relevant life experiences and enduring desires and aspirations that are valued and cherished.

One way to demonstrate the complexity of the L2 self system using the current data is through looking at the multiple future visions incorporated into Hajer and Malak's L2



self systems, which reflected a nested array of future hopes, aspiration goals and dreams. Although both participants' L2 self systems include a central career-oriented self, for each participant, this career self represents personally meaningful visions incorporating academic as well as social dimensions that seem sometimes to overlap but the degree of salience and priority assigned to each vision was clearly identifiable.

However, viewing the L2 self concept as a complex and multidimensional structure is not of course new, because the pursuit of multiple goals has been discussed in learning motivation literature (Wentzel, 1999), which suggested that students may have many reasons for trying to achieve academic goals, some of which can be social. In possible selves research, Ruvolo and Markus (1992) point out that possible selves constructs can contain a range of self schemas that are part of a multifaceted, working self-concept, while Markus and Wurf (1987) assert that the diversity of behaviour to which the self-concept was supposedly related could be understood only when the self concept was viewed as a multifaceted phenomenon; a set or collection of images, schemas, conceptions, goals, or tasks. The current data, however, suggest that understanding the multidimensionality of possible selves requires understanding of the importance these multiple visions represent within the broader future self system, that is, the hierarchy of prioritized desired future selves. In the current data, the evidence of this hierarchal structure can be seen, for example, in the way international-postured self was represented in both Hajer and Malak's L2 self systems: whereas for Malak it was represented as a future end-state of being, for Hajer it was represented as a short-term desired self and did not represent part of her desired end-state self. If we accept the idea that future L2 visions reflect underlying multiple future goals, then it is reasonable to conceive that these visions are very likely to be assigned different values and, hence,

particular visions become prioritized over others. Such hierarchies have been viewed from a goal-theory perspective in terms of the generality and abstractness of the goals involved (e.g., Emmons, 1986; Lazarus & Folkman, 1987). The major principle behind the goal-hierarchy view, as Nurmi (1991) points out, is that the higher level motives, values, or strivings are realized via lower level goals, which are further worked out through a number of sub-goals, where lower level goals constitute the strategy by which the realization of the higher level motives is planned.

In regard to the quest of the current study in general, the implication of understanding the self concept as hierarchal and complex will provide a broader interpretive and explanatory perspective that might be invaluable in regard to understanding ways in which the L2 self relates to learning behaviour. Using Markus and Wurf's (1987) words, the complex approach will help to identify the "core" or "central" elements of the L2 self-concept that are "presumed to affect information processing and behaviour most powerfully" (p. 302).

### **6.2.2 The Interplay between the Social Representation of the Self and the L2 Self**

I have already discussed above the salience of the social influence on the participants' representation of their future selves. In this section, I will discuss the notion of the interplay between the social and the academic selves which, for some learners, emerged as inseparable from each other.

We know that research in achievement motivation has suggested that learners can engage in the pursuit of multiple goals and that the study of goals should include social

goals (e.g., Blumenfeld, 1992; Maehr & Nicholls, 1980; Wentzel, 1999), which include seeking social approval from teachers (Hamilton, Blumenfeld, Akoh, & Miura, 1989), or seeking to bring honour to one's family by succeeding in academic achievement (Urdan & Maehr, 1995). However, when we think about the future imagery that social goals may invoke, it is difficult to think of these desired social images as fully separate from the desired academic ones. We can see this interplay through the way Hajer's desired self as a university lecturer was entangled with her desired ideal social self-image as a respected-by-others academic and whose future work colleagues will be doctors and professors. In other words, her future vision as a university lecturer, whether in the workplace or elsewhere, seems to be more meaningful when associated with the social incentives and rewards which the achievement of the academic self will bring along.

The interplay between the social and the academic selves seems to be a common view in possible selves research, because it has been argued that social representations are critical to the process of framing, developing, and maintaining a sense of self, and are seen as the building blocks by which the academic self is constructed (Oyserman & Markus, 1998). It is important to view self-construction, according to Oyserman & Markus (1998), as a personal project, because social integration and the social order require individuals to belong to a given group to decide who they are and where they belong and, hence, social and cultural groups provide visions of the *good*, the *appropriate*, or *moral* self. In this regard, the current data have also shown how the participants' socio-cultural and life contexts were endorsed as factors in their own assessments of what might be a possible self; which possible L2 self to embrace and which possible L2 self to resist. As such, the concept of a desired L2 self encompasses both culturally shaped and self-constructed visions of the self.

The point of discussing the interplay between the desired academic future-self and the desired social self is that it has the potential to offer a broader and more thorough interpretive scope when we aim to understand how future L2 visions (desired or otherwise) relate to particular motivated behaviour. This is particularly important for the current study because this study's socio-cultural context is characterized by close relationships between the individuals and their family members and society as a whole. According to some theories (e.g., Maehr & Nicholls, 1980; Markus & Kitayama, 1991), in such cultural backgrounds, it is very likely for the individuals' definition of their self-concept to be shaped by a combination of socializing forces that originate both within the family as well as within the larger society, and consequently this perception influences their beliefs about achievement and social goals.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

I started this chapter by providing descriptive background information about the participants' socio-cultural background, their learning histories, and their learning experience in the current school. The main content of the chapter was concerned with the participants' representations of their L2 self systems through which I have described the variation of these representations through each participant's data: while one participant represented her L2 self as comprising one solitary vision, the other two participants showed much richer tapestries of L2 self systems with multidimensional and hierarchal structures. In the last part of this chapter, I discussed what appeared to me as a potential worthy contribution to the L2 Self System literature which emerged from the analysis of the current data and which concerned the complex nature of L2 self system

and the interplay between the social and the academic L2 selves. These data will be crucially drawn upon in the following chapter, in which I will look at how these representations of the L2 self system are related to the participants' learning experience.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Tensions and Alignment between L2 Visions and the L2 Learning Situation**

The data presented and discussed in the previous chapter have revealed the complex and multiple structures of the participants' future L2 selves, which has answered the study's research question concerning the L2 self representations of Libyan students in English-speciality secondary schools. The aim of this chapter is to answer the study's second question which is concerned with understanding the relationship between the participants' L2 selves and their L2 learning situation. That is, understanding what happened to these selves as they interacted with the participants' L2 learning situation; did they change and in what way (if any), what influenced the change, and in what way the participants' learning behaviour patterns were influenced by this interaction. To do so, an in-depth analysis and discussion of the participants' L2 self trajectories will be carried out in the light of the broader conceptualization of the *L2 learning situation* which includes the classroom-specific factors investigated in the quantitative study as well as the broader categories discussed in Chapter 3.

This chapter is divided into three main sections with each section focusing on the themes that emerged from one of the three participants. The chapter then concludes with an extended summary of the main findings. The analysis begins with the themes emerging from Nada's data.

## **7.1 The Role of the L2 Learning Situation in Mediating the Salience and Effect of L2 Visions**

In this section I will demonstrate how the classroom learning situation has marginalized one participant's ideal L2 self while making her ought-to L2 self the salient force in orchestrating her learning engagement. This is despite the fact that this participant's ought-to vision could not be identified in her initial data, presented in the previous chapter. I will also show that even though this participant's ideal L2 self was marginalized in the current learning situation, it remained alive in motivating her thinking about future learning plans when various factors allowed this thinking to become possible. I will demonstrate these findings through Nada's data.

### **7.1.1 Marginalizing the Fluent Speaking L2 Self**

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, at the beginning of the current empirical study, Nada was just starting her third and final year at the school. By investigating her interview and diary data, it was possible to see how Nada's L2 visions have changed over the course of her three-year learning experience at the current school. This change was particularly visible through the comparison that Nada often made between the fluent speaking L2 self she aspired to become when she first joined the current school and her actual L2 self. As early as the first interview, Nada made the existence of this gap clear:

*N:...I never thought it [learning] would be like that. I thought we would be speaking English in the class because we are supposed to become English specialists. I thought I would be able to speak English fluently after two years of studying English but this hasn't happened.*

*I: what do you think the reason is?*

*N: The teachers speak Arabic most of the time and they do not encourage us to speak English.*

*I: what do you expect this year?*

*N: I think the third-year teachers are the best in the school, I hope the teaching will be better than the last two years.*

*(Interview 1, 29 September 2009)*

Similar to the statements in the interview excerpt above, Nada often expressed her disappointment at failing to live up to her ideal vision as a competent L2 self. Her disappointment appeared to stem particularly from her sense of failure to develop the skill of speaking, which reflects the strength of the *English-fluent* speaking vision in her L2 self system discussed in the previous chapter. As the interview excerpt shows, Nada often attributed her failure to speak English to her teachers who, according to her, could not provide her with adequate exposure to oral English in her classroom. However, when I conducted the above interview with Nada, she was just starting her third year with the hope that different teachers in the third year would be able to provide her with better opportunities to support her speaking skills, which she had failed to gain in her first and second year at the school. As the term progressed, Nada's sense of frustration and her critical attitude towards the teaching in her classroom continued, which suggested that her new learning experience in the third year could not live up to her expectations. However, despite the continuation of her critical attitude to teaching in her classroom, which was present in virtually every interview I had with her, my observation of her classroom learning suggested that she was not disengaged but was, rather, committed to



her classroom learning, whether in terms of participation in her classroom activities or preparing for and doing well in her exams. Let us consider, for example, the following interview excerpt in which I tried to understand her sense of frustration in the light of my observation of her learning commitment:

*I: you seem to be doing well in your exams, how does that make you feel?*

*N: I think everyone is doing well when it comes to passing the exams, nobody fails. After you pass the first year, it becomes easy to cope with your exams.*

*I: but you have earned high grades, doesn't that make you happy?*

*N: I think high grades make anyone happy. I could have been happier if good grades come with good learning but this is not the case. The problem is that, for me, learning English is about learning to speak it and not about passing exams*

*(Interview3, 18 November 2009)*

In the above interview excerpt, Nada seems to downplay her classroom achievement by portraying this achievement as insignificant, suggesting that this classroom achievement (i.e., earning high grades) is, to some extent, meaningless to her in the light of her failure to become a fluent speaker of English. Her statements suggest that the meaning which she has assigned to the experience of learning English (that is, learning English in order to fluently speak it) is in conflict with what she was actually experiencing in her classroom (that is, learning to pass her exams). In fact, the data I have gathered from observing Nada's classroom learning suggest that the teaching and learning practices characterizing her classroom learning were unlikely to develop the L2 communicative competence (i.e., speaking skills) which Nada aspired to acquire. This is because in the current context, much of the language of instruction was in Arabic, the talk was controlled by the teacher and students were expected to display linguistic competence

through reading aloud, answering display questions, writing following instructed guidelines, and most importantly, performing well in the exams. Indeed, in a much later interview Nada referred to her learning experience as a “*waste of three years*”, because she was unable to speak English as she expected to do when she first joined the school. Her frustration was consistently present in her interviews despite the fact that she had a successful learning experience if we take into account the criteria upon which success was measured in her particular learning environment.

Another feature of Nada’s learning experience that seems to have contributed to the fact that she was unable to develop her speaking skills is her perceived inability to pursue her English studies independently of the teachers. This was strongly evident in her data, as she often made clear that she could not study on her own and her speaking could only develop with the help of a teacher or someone who is more competent than her, as her response to my question below suggests:

*I: Have you tried to practise and learn speaking on your own at home or somewhere else?*

*N: I tried to but it is useless. The problem is that I cannot study on my own. I learn better when someone is teaching me? I always wanted to take one-to-one courses because I want to have the full attention of the teacher with who I can practise speaking and ask as many questions as I want.*

*(Interview3, 18 November 2009)*

In fact, the lack of autonomous learning tendency in Nada’s case should not come as a surprise because learner autonomy is not commonly encouraged in traditional learning environments in which the students rely on the teacher as the main provider of knowledge and skills. This situation seems to partly explain Nada’s critical attitude

towards her teachers, upon whom she strongly relied to nurture her aspiration to speak fluent English. Of course, one can argue that Nada's expectations of speaking fluent English were unrealistic, as is the case with many language learners, but one can also argue that Nada's L2 learning context as an English-major student has given her high expectations some legitimate grounds. In fact, it was these expectations which initially fuelled her future English-fluent speaking vision and made her commit her academic future solely to the English language. However, the fact that her learning situation did not recognize the importance of developing speaking skills had marginalized this vision and minimized its salience in this specific classroom context.

### **7.1.2 Substantiating the Ought-to L2 Vision**

As the above data suggest, Nada's aspiration to become a fluent L2 speaker of English was clearly undermined by the fact that developing the skill of speaking was not prioritized in her classroom learning environment. The question posed by this situation was whether Nada would withdraw from engaging in her classroom learning which, as I mentioned above, did not appear to be the case. It was evident with the progress of the term that Nada's motivation to succeed in passing her exams was orchestrating a substantial part of her classroom behaviour. For instance, one way through which this commitment was manifested was by relating her questions to her exams as she often interrupted her teachers to ask questions such as "*will this exercise be included in the exam?*" or "*will the exam questions be similar to this exercise?*" In one incident, the Reading teacher told Nada's classroom that she was unable to meet her scheduled lessons and asked the students to study the last unit on their own at home. Nada was the first to ask the teacher if that particular unit would be included in their final term exam

and made sure that the teacher assured her it would not. Moreover, Nada also often brought her exam papers to her interviews with me and questioned her teachers' marking strategies.

These concerns over meeting exam demands do not appear to be congruent with the way Nada idealized L2 learning in her imagination and pose a question concerning the origin of her motivation to do well in the class in the light of her sense of failure to become a fluent English speaker. This made me search for possible factors that may have influenced her learning motivation, despite the fact that she portrayed her L2 self as solely motivated by her ideal speaking L2 self. Therefore, although I asked her in our first interview about the role of her parents in her learning, which she dismissed, I revisited the same question again later in the term:

*I: do your parents push you to earn high grades?*

*N: I wish! None of them asks about my study! I think they know that I will pass as I always did and this is what matters for them. They need to make sure that I pass at the end of the year and that is it.*

*I: what do other people think of your studying? Do they ask you about your study?*

*N: they do ask sometimes because they have to. The question always comes together with asking about your health out of courtesy and not because they really care. I think those who know me know that I do not have a problem with passing exams and I think this is why they do not ask a lot.*

*(Interview4, 2 December 2009)*

On a superficial level, Nada's statements do not indicate that her learning motivation is influenced by external pressures from her parents or others, because her parents "don't ask" and the others ask only because they "have to". However, one can argue that

Nada's statements indicate the presence of implicit external pressure invoked by her realization that her success was taken for granted by her parents and the others who expected her to live up to her reputation as a successful learner, as well as to their expectations of her to pass her exams even though these expectations were not made explicit. It can be argued, therefore, that despite its implicit nature, such pressure was likely to have compelled Nada to exert learning effort in order to live up to these expectations, which assumes the activation of *ought beliefs* in Nada's L2 self system. Such ought beliefs can manifest themselves through striving for success as an end in its own right in order to avoid failure. Furthermore, the institutionalized nature of language learning can strengthen these ought beliefs through strengthening the sense of the responsibility and the duty to succeed which influence the students to invest a great deal of learning effort without having a clear future goal driving this effort. To put it in other words, what seems to explain Nada's motivated behaviour, despite losing her hope to materialize her ideal L2 self as a fluent L2 speaker, is the emergence of her ought-to L2 self which was fuelled by implicit parental pressure and the institutionalized nature of L2 learning.

### **7.1.3 The Wrong Type of Learning Engagement**

As I explained above, the salient feature of Nada's data was the emergence of her ought-to L2 self as the main motivating force of her learning engagement. This learning engagement, however, appeared to be coupled with consistent patterns of challenging and disruptive behaviour, as I briefly mentioned in the previous chapter. This challenging behaviour manifested itself in many ways. One example of this behaviour appeared in the way Nada managed her *language* behaviour; despite the fact that she

spoke fluent Arabic, she frequently used Berber language to address her teachers, which is perceived as a sign of ill-discipline and undesired classroom behaviour. When I asked her why she frequently addressed her teachers in Berber, she said that she had the right to break the rules of her classroom and speak Berber because her teachers broke their own roles by speaking Arabic frequently instead of English. In another instance, Nada refused to open her textbook to participate in Conversation classes for three consecutive classes after an argument she had with the teacher. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, she often challenged the teachers' authority in regard to issues such as setting exam dates or deciding the amount of materials to be covered in the exams. In one incident, Nada challenged her Grammar teacher over the teacher's right to include a question in a monthly exam because the question was different from what the teacher actually taught. In a stimulated recall interview, Nada said that the teacher had no right to include difficult questions because the poor quality of her teaching did not give her the right to do so.

Of course, Nada's challenging behaviour cannot solely be attributed to her frustration with the quality of the teaching she consistently criticized, nor can it be solely attributed to the fact that she was made to pursue her ought-to self instead of her ideal L2 self which she cherished. However, Nada often associated her disruptive behaviour with her teachers' teaching practice, such as when she justified addressing her teachers in Berber by criticizing their overuse of Arabic in the classroom. Therefore, the fact that she was made to engage in the pursuit of grades rather than mastering the skill of speaking she desired could be one salient reason for her disruptive behaviour. Past educational psychology research has argued that the sole pursuit of exam achievement (i.e., performance-orientated learning) can be positively related to disruptive and maladaptive

behaviour (Kaplan & Maehr, 1999) and can also be related to the use of self-handicapping strategies (Midgley & Urdan, 2001). In other words, because Nada did not possess a personally valued L2 self which could benefit from the instrumental value of her classroom learning, she *devalued* her classroom learning, in which she was made to pursue a less valued and less cherished L2 vision, and, consequently, the quality of the learning motivation has led to inconsistent learning engagement that was often disrupted by challenging behaviour.

#### **7.1.4 Maintaining Positive Future Outlook**

Despite the fact that Nada's ideal L2 self appeared to have little to do with motivating her current learning behaviour, this ideal vision did not seem to have faded away in regard to influencing her thinking about future learning decisions, because of her intention to enrol in the English Department at the local College of Arts where she thought she would have better opportunities to develop her English speaking skills. In other words, Nada's motive to continue learning English after she finished at the current school suggests that she was still aspiring to materialize her ideal L2 self, as the following interview excerpt indicates:

*N: I want to join the college because like everyone I want to have a university degree and also I want to learn more. I know that all the teachers there are from India who speak only English. I know some friends who study there and they say the teaching is very good there.*

*I: What will you do with the college degree if you are not thinking of a career?*

*N: I did not say I do not want a career, I am just not thinking about it now. The college will improve my English skills.*

*(Interview4, 2 December 2009)*

From Nada's statements, it is clear that her hope to become a competent L2 speaker is still alive, as she still hopes to study in a better learning environment that meets her expectations of good language learning when she joins the college. The fact that she particularly mentioned the Indian teachers who spoke only English shows that she still hopes to improve her speaking skills, despite the fact that she has failed to do so in the three years she has spent at the current school. This shows that Nada's ideal vision as a fluent English speaker is still active in shaping her decisions about future. Another important point to draw from Nada's statements concerns her belief that her failure to speak English was not caused by her L2 ability but was, rather, caused by her L2 learning situation, particularly, by incompetent teaching. In support of the latter point, Nada's statements often indicated that, had she been provided with the opportunity to practise oral English, she could have developed her speaking skill, as one of her diary entries (8 November 2009) indicates:

*Today I presented my interview project with Nadeen (her seat partner) to the class. I was very nervous in the minutes leading up to it, but once I stood in front of the class and started talking I actually quite enjoyed it and I did not want it to end even though I know I made some mistakes. I wish we do these activities more often because they are very useful for learning to speak skills*

What we can see in Nada's diary entry is that taking part in this particular presentation did not only stimulate her motivation and enjoyment, but we can also detect a sense of belief in her ability to improve if she was provided with similar opportunities to learn and exercise speaking skills. Taken together, It can be argued that Nada's belief in her ability to develop her speaking skills, the available opportunity of joining the college, and the strength of her fluent L2 speaking self have minimized the damage caused to her

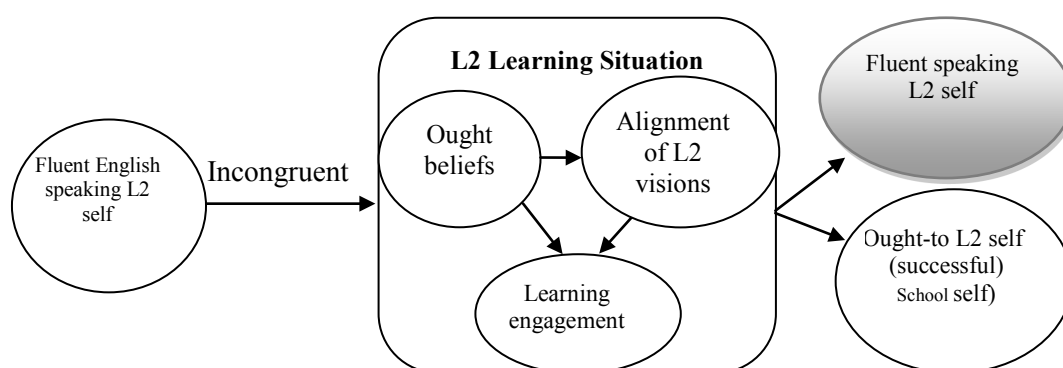


ideal L2 self by her current learning situation. That is, the hope of reviving her ideal self has not faded away, even though Nada appears to be convinced that she cannot improve her speaking skills in the current learning situation, no matter how hard she tries.

### 7.1.5 Summary of Nada's L2 Self Experience

The findings of Nada's data are summed up in Figure 7.1 below which illustrates the analysis and discussion I have provided above.

Figure 7.1: diagram illustrating the interaction between Nada's L2 system and her learning situation



As the diagram shows, Nada came to the school with a clearly defined vision of herself as a fluent speaker of English which appears at the left end of the diagram. However, this vision was incongruent with her L2 learning situation and, hence, this vision could not materialize as is shown by the *grey-shaded* circle shows at the far right side. As a result, Nada ought-to beliefs began to emerge and influence her learning engagement by aligning the salience of her visions in such a way that her learning effort was invested in the pursuit of her developed ought-to L2 self which she was able to materialize as appears at the far right side.

As I have explained above, Nada's could not make true her cherished fluent speaking vision and her classroom learning engagement was not invested in supporting this particular vision because the importance of developing and practicing fluent English speaking skills was not recognized by her classroom learning situation. In other words, Nada's desired fluent L2 self was not contextually cued in which case, as Oyserman et al. (2006) contend, learning behaviour is unlikely to be regulated and positive learning engagement is unlikely to be sustained because it is only the contextually cued possible selves (chronically or situationally made salient) are likely to regulate behaviour. We can see that Nada's idealized fluent self was not linked to learning strategies to attain this self whereas her ought-to L2 self was made relevant to learning strategies in order to meet expectations of school success. As I explained earlier, the institutionalized nature of Nada's classroom learning has led her to '*put on hold*' the pursuit of her personalized and idealized L2 self as a fluent speaker of English and engage in the pursuit of an ought-to L2 vision which only recognizes the importance of performing well in the exams. Crucial to this conclusion is Nada's perception of the role of her teachers' competence in marginalizing her ideal L2 vision and the fact that she lacked a tendency for autonomous learning, as she was predominantly reliant on her teachers. This situation has influenced Nada to align her L2 visions and allow her ought-to self to become the salient L2 vision in which she invested considerable learning effort.

The quality of this investment, admittedly, was not always manifested through positive learning engagement. It can be argued that it was the loss of hope of developing her possible cherished L2 self which facilitated Nada's drift into the challenging and disruptive behaviour she strongly displayed. She clearly did not value the instrumental

value of her classroom learning and, hence, her investment of learning effort into her ought-to self was not balanced by a desired instrumental vision such as a career-oriented self. This seems to be one of the factors that cued Nada's disruptive behaviour which can be supported by Oyserman's et al. (2006) contention that students with balanced and plausible academically focused possible selves are less likely to be disruptive and more likely to be behaviourally engaged in classroom activities.

Another important finding in Nada's data concerns the fact that her ideal vision remained active in influencing her motivational thinking, even though this thinking did influence her current learning behaviour as such. Despite the fact that her learning situation did not support her ideal vision as a fluent speaking self, other factors worked together to keep this vision alive. Nada's intention to continue her learning through enrolling in the English department at the local college meant that she still believed in the possibility of materializing her fluent speaking self. This possibility was also mediated by the fact that she attributed her failure to her learning situation rather than her own ability which, according to attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), is likely to maintain motivation by sustaining belief in one's ability to achieve enduring goals. For Nada, the college in this sense seemed to function as a motivating *imagined community* (Norton, 2000) where she hoped to learn and practise English fluency and where she hoped her ideal L2 vision will be looked after by more competent teachers. Without the presence of these factors, it seems difficult to imagine how Nada's ideal L2 vision as a fluent speaker would survive the setback she endured in the current circumstances and be able to influence her thinking about future learning engagement. These factors seem to have provided Nada with the context of *effective positive thinking*, which according to

Ushioda (1997) sustains a positive self-concept of personal ability and a sense of motivation in the face of negative affective experiences.

## **7.2 Negotiating and Balancing the Ideal L2 Visions**

In the previous chapter, I discussed how one participant's (Hajer's) data reflected multiple ideal L2 visions which were incorporated within her ideal L2 self system and which were inextricably intertwined with an idealized social self. Through Hajer's data, I will show how these multiple ideal L2 visions allowed her to balance her L2 visions with her L2 learning situation and remain positively engaged in her classroom learning, despite the fact that she perceived her learning situation as unable to support her most desired ideal L2 vision. I will show how Hajer's idealization of the instrumental value of learning has not only focused her learning engorgement on the pursuit of her ideal L2 self but also influenced the way she valued her learning situation in general.

### **7.2.1 Marginalizing the Competent L2 Vision**

As I discussed in the previous chapter, one salient representative of Hajer's future L2 self was her desire to become a competent L2 user. However, similar to Nada's case, Hajer strongly expressed her disappointment with the quality of teaching in her interviews and often made clear her sense of failure to live up to her expectations of becoming an *effective* L2 user. For instance, in the following interview excerpt, Hajer's disappointment comes clear as she explains to me why she was asking so many questions in her Grammar classes:

*H: I ask questions because if I do not ask I do not understand. I always feel that the teacher's explanation is not complete because I am always left with unanswered questions about what the teacher says.*

*I: how?*

*H: the teacher explains the rules and then we answer some exercises. Before the exams we revise the rule and memorize the exercise because the exam is usually very similar to what we practice in the class. The problem is that I can read, and I can answer the exercises but I find it difficult when I come to express myself by speaking or writing and I often make mistakes. After three years in this school, I still cannot use English as I wanted to use it.*

*(Interview 3, November 2009)*

As Hajer's statements suggest, there is a clear mismatch between her expectations of attaining effective L2 competence and what she actually achieved. Her expectations of achieving effective levels of L2 competence, according to her statements, were not met, because learning for effective communicative competence was not the goal of her classroom learning, which reflects a tension between her desired future self as a competent user of English and her classroom learning situation. Although Hajer has talked about her failure to speak fluent English, as was the case with Nada, she seemed to see mastering English more in terms of effective and competent application of the grammatical structures to which she was extensively exposed in her grammar classes. This appeared to be the case particularly from Hajer's questioning behaviour which was notably frequent in her grammar classes, and from her narratives through which she expressed the difficulty she faced in mastering effective grammar use. In the same interview I quoted above, Hajer explains why she was very concerned about her knowledge of the grammar:

*Grammar for me is the backbone of learning English because if you fail to learn grammar you fail to use the language. The problem is that I can explain most of the grammar rules I studied to you, but if you ask me to use them in meaningful sentences I cannot, because we do not practise how to use these rules. Our grammar classes are often boring because they follow the same routine: the teacher explains new rules and asks us to answer the exercise so we can answer similar exercises in the exams.*

*(Interview 3, November 2009)*

In the above interview excerpt, Hajer's statements seem to reflect some of the insights I gathered from observing the teaching and learning of grammar in her classes. The data I gathered from grammar classes show that the students were typically expected to demonstrate grammatical competence through, first, declaring to the teacher that they understood the teacher's explanation during the class and, second, by answering follow up instructed exercises such as completion tasks, gap filling, multiple choice, or identifying certain grammatical structures in a text. In doing this, the teacher typically followed structured input tasks as outlined in the Work Book, through which the students received plentiful examples of the target structure which routinely followed the presentation of the new rule, which was often explained carefully using Arabic. This careful, extensive explanation in Arabic clearly reflected the teacher's intention to make the students consciously attend to the target structure and understand its meaning. What the students were not exposed to, however, was manipulating the output, that is, using the grammar structures they studied in contexts other than the exercises instructed by the Work Book, which did not allow the students to process grammatical structures in real life contexts by using these structures in constructing their own language.

As I discussed elsewhere, the grammar teachers in the current school seemed to follow a very similar approach to grammar teaching and Hajer's grammar teacher was not different in this regard. After this teacher finished a class in which she explained to her students how to use the past perfect rule in telling stories that contain *problems* and *results*, I asked Hajer's grammar teacher in a stimulated recall interview (12 November, 2009) why she skipped a section in which the students were instructed to think of an alternative ending of the same story and tell it to the rest of the class, which was aimed to function as a production task by which the students were expected to try out the target structure in their own sentences. The teacher justified her decision to skip this section by saying:

*There is not enough time to cover all the exercises which are included in each unit because the amount of the materials in the Work Book cannot be completed within the timeframe as outlined by the curriculum guide. I try to focus on what is important for the students' needs by explaining the rules very carefully because without careful explanation, the students will be lost*

In line with the teacher's statements, my observation of her classes showed that she put the greatest emphasis on making the grammatical structure accessible to the students, raising their consciousness of the way these structures work, and making sure that she checked the students' understanding by instructing them to complete the Work Book exercises. The teacher, however, did not seem to perceive encouraging the students to produce their own language and try out the target structure as equally important to the focus on form, which can be seen in her statements above. However, much of the teacher's teaching effort seemed motivated by the need to prepare her students to meet the requirements of the extensive schedule of paper-based exams. It seems clear, therefore, why Hajer perceived her learning situation as an able to support her desired

competent L2 self after almost three years of studying at the current school. In other words, Hajer's L2 learning situation could not recognize the importance of developing effective communicative language skills that go beyond the need to meet the requirements of the institutionalized and traditional settings of her language learning situation. The question posed by this situation is whether these circumstances will undermine Hajer's motivation and learning engagement in some way. This is what the following section looks at.

### **7.2.2 Empowering the Instrumental L2 Self**

In the previous chapter, I have discussed how Hajer idealized the instrumental value of her classroom learning as much as she idealized her desired effective L2 competence. I also described how Hajer's classroom behaviour clearly reflected positive learning engagement and how she consistently appeared to be cooperative with her teacher, conforming to her classroom rules, and a responsible learner. However, Hajer's learning motivation which was evident in her consistent positive learning engagement was not congruent with the tension between her idealized competent L2 self and her learning situation which she repeatedly expressed, which suggests that her motivation was likely to be thwarted as a result. Hajer's consistent learning engagement suggested that this engagement was not negatively thwarted by the unsupportive learning situation for her cherished competent L2 self. This becomes understandable once we consider the salience of the instrumental dimension in her L2 self system, as I described in the last chapter. This is because this instrumental L2 self was expected to influence her to pursue high grades and finish top of her school, which she idealized even though she realized



that it was impossible for her to obtain the L2 competence she aspired to under the current learning situation.

The salience of the instrumental vision in Hajer's data appeared to manifest itself through different learning behaviour. For instance, in the fifth week of the first term, Hajer told me that she was going to stop asking questions in her grammar classes after she had realized that the grammar teacher was becoming annoyed with her questions; she was worried that the teacher might deduct her exam marks. In response to that I asked her:

*I: but you said you do not understand unless you ask!*

*H: this is true but what I ask about seems important only to me and not to the others because the teacher teaches what she thinks is important. I can always ask for help somewhere else but what is important for me this year is not to drop marks.*

*(Interview 3, November 2009)*

As we can see in Hajer's statements, she is willing to compromise her need to seek deeper understanding of grammar by avoiding asking questions when she felt that her effort to earn maximum grades was threatened and might be halted by her teacher's attitude to her questions. In fact, later in the term, it was evident from Hajer's classroom engagement that she did indeed ask fewer questions than before. Hajer's adjustment of her questioning behaviour seems to reflect the priority she has given to the pursuit of her instrumental L2 vision under the circumstances of her current learning situation. Unlike Nada, Hajer's alignment of her L2 visions sustained congruence between her idealized L2 self and her L2 learning situation because she idealized her school successful-self that was promotionally oriented and which was a prerequisite to the achievement of her

long-term idealized L2 vision (i.e., university lecturer). Therefore, it can be argued that the salience of the instrumental dimension within her multidimensional L2 self system had allowed Hajer to pursue the L2 vision that was most congruent with the affordances of her classroom learning situation. This L2 vision was personally valued and idealized by Hajer and, therefore, she was able to maintain heightened learning motivation and focus her learning engagement on the pursuit of her idealized instrumental self, despite the fact that she was unable to materialize her most desired future vision as a competent user of the L2.

### **7.2.3 Engaging the Ideal Social Self**

Another important feature in Hajer's data is the social dimension of the relationship between her L2 visions and her learning engagement, which suggests that the attribution of her learning engagement solely to her instrumental L2 vision may be inaccurate without taking account of the social attributes and incentives associated with her desired academic L2 self. During my observation of her classroom behaviour, Hajer appeared not only to portray and pursue a successful academic self image but she also appeared eager to portray and pursue desired social status as a popular student and a group leader, a fluent and articulate speaker who constantly sought appreciation and respect of her peers and teachers. Consider for example the following two excerpts; the first is an interview excerpt in which Hajer speaks about her attitude of speaking Berber in the classroom:

*H: I do not understand why some students speak Berber when addressing their teachers.*

*I: What is wrong with that?*

*H: It is lack of respect for the teacher and it also means that you [as a student] do not have a good character. How do you want the teachers to respect you when you address them in Berber?*

*(Interview 2, 14 October 2009)*

In this diary entry (4 December, 2009), Hajer talks about her peers:

*What I find annoying is when students ask obvious questions for the sake of asking. When you ask a question, everyone should benefit from the answer. Sometimes I ask questions to which I know the answer because because I know that the other students will benefit from the answer.*

In the first interview excerpt Hajer associates speaking Berber in the classroom with disrespectful behaviour and speaking Arabic with a good character traits, which clearly reflects her endorsement of the wider ideologies about the use of Arabic and Berber both inside and outside the school environment and how she uses this ideology to show and win respect. Throughout my observation of Hajer in her classroom, she never addressed her teachers in Berber, while she always spoke Berber when she interacted with her peers. For instance, on one rare occasion, Hajer's pronunciation teacher started speaking Berber in an off-task interaction at the end of her class in which Hajer was the only student who maintained speaking Arabic to the teacher whereas everyone else was speaking Berber. In the second excerpt, Hajer describes her peers' questions as 'obvious' and her statement clearly reflects her perception of her own questions as cleverer than her peers. What is most intriguing is her statement that she asks questions to which she knew the answer, which suggests that the questions she often asked were not only influenced by her desire to learn what she did not know but also to *show off* her knowledge, even though her statement suggests a different motive.

In short, what we can see from Hajer's classroom behaviour that she was pursuing an image of herself that *stands out from the crowd*, which was influenced by her desire not only to achieve desired academic goals but also to pursue desired social status that is worthy of appreciation and respect by others. Therefore, it might be difficult to attribute Hajer's motivated learning engagement exclusively to the pursuit of her academic L2 self. In other words, we can say that it was both the desire to pursue the academic L2 self as well as the desired social self that were orchestrating Hajer's motivated learning behaviour.

#### **7.2.4 Integrating Divergent Multiple Visions**

Another finding in Hajer's data suggests that, although her instrumental L2 self was dominant in influencing her learning engagement, her ideal competent L2 vision was able to motivate part of her learning engagement when the latter vision was invoked by engagement in a stimulating activity. Let us look at the data obtained from Hajer's Reading classes, which she highly regarded. In the following interview excerpt, I asked Hajer why she appeared very keen to read in her Reading classes:

*I: I noticed that you were begging the Reading teacher to let you read.*

*H: Yes, this is because I enjoy reading. I do not feel confident when I speak or write but I'm proud of how well I read and I feel very confident when I read, especially when I read aloud while the class listens to me. Actually, reading aloud in the class makes it easy for me to remember and memorize what I read. You know that we have to memorize all the reading passages we study for the exams.*

*(interview 4, 21 December 2009)*

The above extract shows a rare piece of data in which Hajer praises an activity as 'enjoyable'. The first time I observed Hajer was in a Reading class, during which I

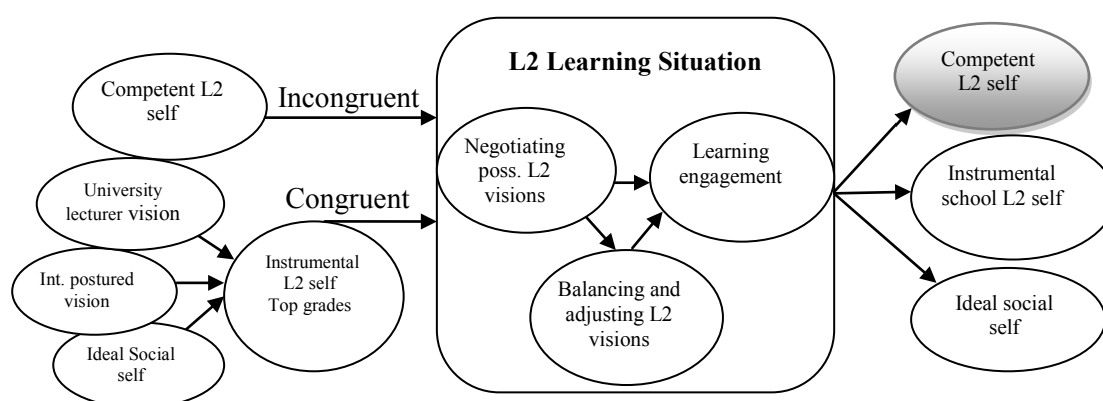
noticed her eagerness to read and noticed the clarity and sense of confidence in her reading. One reason of her interest in and enjoyment of reading seems to be, as she states above, that through reading aloud she was able to experience a sense of *ideal L2 competence* which was stimulated by the reading activity. Moreover, as she states above, through reading aloud in the class, Hajer was able not only to experience her L2 competence but also to attract her peers' attention and admiration, because part of her sense of reading enjoyment is that she liked to be "*listened to*" by the whole class. This, as I previously argued, seems to reflect the influence of Hajer's desired social image. On a different level, another important value that Hajer explicitly assigned to her engagement in reading activity is that reading aloud makes it easy for her to memorize the passage content. As the last two statements of the interview excerpt above show, Hajer exploited her engagement in an activity she idealized to support her instrumental L2 self, by using reading aloud as a strategy to memorize the reading passages in such a way that she wanted to read more in the class so she could remember more in the exams.

The point to take further from the current discussion is that the learning situation can provide learning opportunities which can support different dimensions of the L2 self. We can see how Hajer assigned different values to the same reading activity and how this activity tapped into more than one vision. That is, Hajer found her engagement in reading activity to fulfil her ideal competent L2 vision, fuel her ideal social image, and strengthen her instrumental L2 vision. This suggests that it might be useful to consider the possibility that a particular learning behaviour might be influenced by the pursuit of more than one L2 vision, based on what kind of stimuli a particular activity invokes.

## 7.2.5 Summary of Hajer's L2 Self Experience

In order to sum up the salient findings of Hajer's data that I have outlined in the above analysis, I sketched Figure 7.2 below.

Figure 7.2: Illustration of the interaction between Hajer's L2 self system and her L2 learning situation



As the figure shows, Hajer's ideal L2 vision as a competent L2 self is incongruent with her L2 learning situation and, hence, it is not materialized under the current learning situation as signified by the *grey-shaded* circle at the top right end of the figure. The other future visions (i.e., *university lecture vision*, *international postured vision*, and the *ideal social self*) are mediated by Hajer's instrumental L2 self (i.e., *finishing top of the school*) in the sense that materializing these visions is contingent on succeeding in finishing top of the school. Because Hajer's instrumental L2 self was congruent with her learning situation, she was able to sustain positive learning engagement through negotiating and balancing her multiple visions and adjusting her learning engagement according to her instrumental L2 self, which she perceived as congruent with her learning situation, and which she was able to materialize as is shown at the far left of the diagram.

More than one salient point can be gathered from Hajer's data. The first point can be seen in the fact that, similar to Nada's data, Hajer's data provides evidence of the tension between the two participants' desired competent L2 selves and their learning situation. We have seen that both participants had to give up the pursuit of their most desired L2 self as competent L2 users which they expected to attain as future professional users of English when they joined the current school. Both the participants' data show how the current situation has determined the course of their pursuit of their L2 selves. However, the data shows us how learners are different in reacting to the loss of a cherished L2 self, because of the different factors characterizing each learner's learning situation. Unlike in Nada's case, we saw how the availability of alternative ideal L2 visions in Hajer's L2 self system and the salience of her instrumental L2 self allowed her to remain positively engaged in learning and impelled her to compromise her ideal learning behaviour, such as when she had to give up asking questions in grammar classes after she felt that her instrumental L2 vision was threatened. Moreover, Hajer's data shows us how the pursuit of her instrumental L2 self was intertwined with her pursuit of her ideal *social* self, because as she appeared to pursue academic success as a top achieving student, at the same time she was keen to maintain and strengthen her appreciated and the admired-by-others image as a successful and a top achieving person.

Therefore, it can be argued that what has influenced Hajer's motivation to pursue and materialize her instrumental L2 self, despite the marginalization of her desired ideal competent L2 vision, is the strength and the idealization of the instrumental value of her classroom learning. Motivational research has established that the extent to which students perceive their learning as instrumental to achieving personally valued future

goals (i.e., perceived instrumentality) is a crucial motivational factor in the classroom environment (Husman & Lens, 1999; R. B. Miller & Brickman, 2004). Miller and Brickman's (2004) work on future-oriented motivation and social-cognitive theory emphasizes the way personally valued future goals lead to the development of a system of sub-goals that facilitate future goal attainment. In Hajer's case, the clarity and elaboration of her sub-goals clearly helped her to recognize which of the many choices she faced in her immediate environment was instrumental to reaching her personally valued future L2 vision and was at the same time congruent with the affordances of her classroom learning situation. In other words, it was evident from her data that Hajer perceived the pursuit of her instrumental self as a viable route to materialize her idealized future visions because this perception was focused on the recognition of the instrumental relationship between her classroom learning and the attainment of her possible personally valued future goal. Such perception, according to Miller and Brickman (2004), can influence students' cognitive engagement because of the incentive value of these goals. However, we should not lose sight of the fact that Hajer's perception of this instrumental relationship, using Ryan & Deci's (2000) words, carries greater incentive value than other extrinsic outcomes that are less closely tied to her identity, that is, it carried her idealized incentives which were fuelling her various desired future visions. This appears to be the key factor in orchestrating her positive engagement patterns and in sustaining her motivation, by which she succeeded in materializing her idealized instrumental self and bridging the gap towards materializing her long-term idealized visions.

On another level, the current findings are consistent with the view contending that future possible selves are dynamic and are determined in the context of interactions with other



(Nurius, Casey, Lindhurst, & Macy, 2006) and that the substantiation of possible selves is contingent on whether these selves are validated and affirmed or threatened or ignored by the surrounding environment (Markus, 2006). However, the present findings show that viewing the ideal L2 self from a multiple-construct perspective is the key which enabled us to uncover the ways in which Hajer's classroom learning engagement was related to her L2 self. In Hajer's case, having multiple L2 visions under unfavourable classroom learning circumstances was significantly instrumental for her to navigate through the difficulties and balance her L2 visions with the affordance of her learning situation in order to achieve the most desired L2 vision which she perceived as plausible to achieve.

### **7.3 The Transformation of the L2 Self**

In the analysis of Hajer and Nada's data, I have shown how their classroom learning situations have influenced them to give up the pursuit of their idealized L2 visions and engage in the pursuit of other visions that were plausible within their learning situation. In this section, I discuss how one participant's future ideal L2 self was transformed into an ought-to L2 self as soon after she began her learning experience at the current school she realized that her L2 competence was unable to support her desired ideal L2 self. I will argue this case through Malak's data, whose initial representation of her L2 self system, as discussed in the previous chapter, incorporated future visions of herself as an ideal school successful self, a translator in an oil company, and an international citizen.

### 7.3.1 Adjusting Future L2 Visions to L2 Competence

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Malak was just starting her first year at the current school when she became a key participant in the current study. I explained that her learning experience appeared to be characterized by her struggle to meet the academic demands of her classroom learning, and she often lagged behind the rest of the students in regard to comprehending what was taught, which made her frequently ask the teachers to repeat and clarify what they had just explained. Despite this difficulty, Malak was eager to volunteer to answer questions and participate in the classes, even though she was often unable to provide accurate answers and seemed to struggle with her reading compared with her peers. In the second interview (22 October 2009), Malak expressed concerns about her learning:

*We study four English classes a day and this is a lot to keep up with. Grammar is very complicated and I feel that I do not understand most of what the teacher says and I feel that everybody else can understand.*

Consistent with the above statements, during the first few weeks Malak's struggle was evident, particularly in her grammar classes in which she invested a considerable amount of effort to understand what was taught in her classes. One aspect of Malak's struggle was manifested in her consistent seeking of help, where she often interrupted her teacher, asking her to repeat or explain something that had just been said or explained. However, as the term progressed, Malak's help seeking behaviour decreased and become less frequent than it was in the first few weeks of the term. In an interview, Malak attributed this change to the fact that she began to feel embarrassed because she was the only student who always asked questions and also because she felt that her teacher started to show signs of unhappiness with her

constant questions. However, there seems to be another reason that influenced this change in Malak's classroom behaviour as it shows in the following interview excerpt in which she explains how she managed to earn a good mark in the mid-term grammar exam:

*In the beginning I did not understand the system; I was asking about everything because I thought that I had to understand everything the teacher says in order to succeed. I was becoming frustrated but then I learnt that not everything is important and the students do not actually understand everything as I thought.*

*(Interview 3, 17 November 2009)*

In the above excerpt, Malak explains that she has come to realize that she did not have to understand everything taught in her classroom in order to succeed. She uses the word “*system*” to refer to her new understanding of her classroom learning, which she further explains in the same interview:

*It was Huda [her seat partner] who was very helpful to me because she is very good in guessing the important things [important lesson components] that might be included in the exams which tells me how to focus my effort.*

The “*system*” which Malak talks about is clearly the same system which Nada and Hajer described as learning to meet the requirements of exams, which was not congruent with their idealized learning environment. We can see from Malak's statement how her peer helped her to learn how to invest and focus her learning effort. With this help, she has come to realize that she did not need to seek help from the teachers in order to do as well as the others. What seems to be interesting is that, although Malak's adjustment of her learning engagement was tailored only to meet the minimum exam requirement, success in meeting these requirements was coupled with a sense of satisfaction and achievement.

Malak's L2 vision as school successful self which invoked a sense of achievement is clearly different from the visions she earlier articulated. The key in this change seems to lie in her perception of her actual L2 competence in light of the demands of her classroom, which appears to have impelled her to adjust her future vision according to what her perceived academic ability made plausible for her: to meet the minimum requirements of school success rather than the pursuit of excellence in passing her exams.

### 7.3.2 Emergent New L2 Self

*I did not expect to earn passing marks. To be honest, in the first few weeks I thought that I was going to fail because I found it very difficult. I had to work hard because failing would be a disaster. Many people expected me to fail because of my past experience and I did not want that to prove them right.*

In the above interview excerpt (17 December 2009) Malak was responding to my question concerning how she felt about passing her term exams. We can detect a strong sense of satisfaction in Malak's words because she managed to secure passing grades after she had experienced fear of failure earlier in the term, prompted by the discrepancy between her actual competence and the demands of her classroom learning. This suggests that she was motivated by the need to prevent failure and to avoid public humiliation in front of those who questioned her ability to succeed and expected her to fail, as she states in the above interview excerpt. This, in turn, indicates the emergence of what can be described as a preventive-focused motivation which orchestrated Malak's learning engagement later in the term. In the earlier presentation of her L2 visions, Malak articulated her desire to succeed and pursue a promotionally-orientated future self as a translator in an oil company which will eventually lead her to travel abroad.

However, in contrast to her earlier ambition, Malak's changing classroom participation suggests that she was beginning to study primarily to avoid failure rather than to achieve her initial idealized L2 self. In other words, she became engaged in and motivated by the pursuit of an ought-to L2 self with a preventive focus because, as she describes above, her fear to fail motivated her to work hard, seek the help from her peer, and invest her effort in earning passing marks.

What is particularly interesting in Malak's data is that her original ideal L2 visions appear to have little influence not only on her learning behaviour but also on the affective dimension of her learning, which suggests that a change or transformation of her L2 visions has occurred. That is, instead of expressing feelings of disappointment or frustration, as was the case for Hajer and Nada, Malak perceived her experience as a fulfilling one, as her data clearly reflect a sense of satisfaction with becoming a successful school self who merely managed to meet the minimum passing requirements. Moreover, apart from the first interview, Malak did not mention her ideal visions in her interviews or diaries in any context, while the desire to succeed in her exams and concerns over failing appear more prominent in her data. Her last diary entry (5 January 2009) below seems to show how she perceived her experience in the first term in the current school:

*I think specializing in English was the right thing for me to do even though this first term was full of challenges and I struggled to pass my exams. I have learnt a lot and I feel good in my heart because I have worked hard and I have accomplished something.*

There is a strong sense of accomplishment in Malak's statements which was clearly invoked by the fact that she succeeded in overcoming the challenges she was faced with in her classroom learning. The fact that she found passing her exams rewarding and satisfactory after she experienced a sense of agitation invoked by her fear of failure suggest that the only L2 vision that is present and dominant is her ought-to L2 self who strived to succeed in passing her exams. This suggests that the new emergent motivation that was characterized by the fear of failure and the desire to prevent it has transformed her earlier vision of the ideal school successful L2 self, which was promotionally-oriented, into an ought-to L2 self which was preventively oriented.

In fact, another factor seems to have contributed to the change in Malak's L2 vision which is the change in her attitude towards the career of teaching. In her first interview, Malak said that she did *not* want to become a teacher, but this attitude towards teaching seemed to change, as a later interview revealed when she hinted that teaching was a possible option. In our last interview, Malak said that learning English was more difficult than she thought and it was unlikely that she would become a competent translator. I asked her how she felt about that:

*I: If you could not get that job as a translator, this means that you will not be able to travel and see the world.*

*M: I know, I did not think that English would be very difficult.*

*I: do you have other plans?*

*M: No. Frankly, I started to think that teaching is not a bad idea.*

*I: I thought you did not want to become a teacher. What has changed your mind?*

*M: One reason is that becoming a translator means I should be very good at all the skills of English and this is very difficult. Another reason is that I*

*have changed my opinion about teaching. Frankly, my grammar teacher has made me think that teaching is not a bad job because she is very professional and dedicated to her job and makes teaching look interesting.*

*(Interview 6, 16/5/2010)*

As can be seen from Malak's responses, her original L2 vision as an international traveller, which represented her ideal end-state L2 self and motivated her to become an English-major student, has disappeared from her future imagination of herself as an L2 user, because her expectations of what she might become were unrealistic in respect to the kind of language skill the translation profession actually requires. One vision remained in her L2 self system, that is, the school successful self. However, this vision, which was initially portrayed through ideal school success leading to idealized future career, was transformed into an instrumental vision that influenced Malak to seek basic classroom success and pursue a career as a teacher. In fact, it is appropriate to use the word 'transformation' to describe the change in Malak's beliefs and values about her learning and how this change resulted in the emergence of the future teacher vision and the school successful self whose features have changed.

What should be stressed in Malak's case is the fact that her perception of her learning competence has clearly played a significant role in the way she perceived the possibility of attaining her future L2 visions. Her statements such as: "*I did not expect to earn passing mark*", "*I thought that I was going to fail*", "*English would be very difficult and I struggled to pass my exams*" clearly indicate that she attributed the change and the transformation in her L2 visions to her low L2 competence. Unlike Hajer and Nada, Malak's data suggest that the perception of the extent to which learners perceives their L2 visions as possible to achieve cannot always be solely shaped by classroom-specific

factors, but is also shaped by the learner's sense of L2 competence. As Pizzolato (cited in Dörnyei, 2009) puts it, the relation between what students want to become and what students actually become may be mediated by what students feel they are able to become. On another level, crucial to Malak's data is the fact that the current academic term was an important period during which she could develop a perception of herself as an L2 user in both the present and the future dimensions, because she was just embarking upon her experience as an L2 major student. Therefore, the role played by Malak's classroom learning situation in regard to her L2 vision seems to be encapsulated in providing her with information and feedback about her L2 competence and an alternative L2 future vision that is plausible for her, rather than hindering her from obtaining her idealized L2 vision, as in the cases of Hajer and Nada.

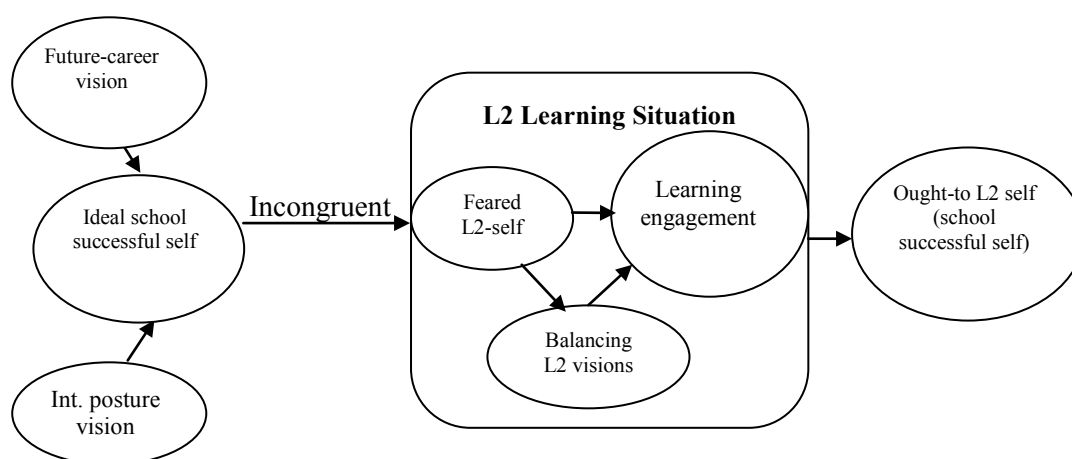
A final important point pertains to the fact that Malak's developing motivation to pursue her newly developed L2 vision, which has grown out of her failure to attain her ideal L2 visions, seems to reflect her distinctive characteristic as a human being who was able to attain a degree of objectivity towards her learning environment and to make decisions among a range of limited possible choices, rather than letting her failure determine her motivation. Such motivational trajectories, as Ushioda (2009) suggests, impel us to look at L2 motivation through the view that the learner's agency or human intentionality must always contend with the properties of social structure, which act to constrain or facilitate our intentions, and motivation is thus not an individual difference characteristic, but emerges from relations between human intentionality and social structure (p. 221).



### 7.3.2 Summary of Malak's L2 Self Experience

Malak's data can be summed up in three main points: the first point pertains to the influence of the perception of L2 competence and the demands of the course on motivation to pursue future L2 visions. The second point concerns the importance of the feared L2 self in balancing one's L2 visions and in adjusting learning behaviour. The third point concerns the role of individual agency and personality in shaping decisions about learning engagement in the pursuit of one's future L2 visions. Let us first look at the following Figure which illustrates the trajectory of Malak's L2 visions in her first year at the current school.

Figure 7.3: Transformation of L2 visions through the L2 learning situation



As the figure shows, none of Malak's original L2 visions which were identified in the previous chapter were congruent with her learning situation because of the discrepancy between her L2 competence and the academic demands of her learning situation. As a result, these visions disappeared from Malak's L2 self system after her ideal successful school L2 self was transformed into an ought-to L2 self. A major factor in Malak's data

is the emergence of a feared L2 self which balanced her learning engagement and influenced her learning effort to approach her ought-to L2 self.

A key element in Malak's data is the role of her perception of her L2 competence in influencing her perception of future possibilities as a future L2 user. In fact, the perception of one's competence has been found to be a major determinant in influencing motivation to pursue future goals because past research has contended that the fundamental causes of proximal achievement goals are the learner's future aspirations and their perception of their competence. For example, Elliot (1999) contended that the connection between perceived competence and future goals is quite clear: high competence perceptions lead to approach motivation while low competence perceptions lead to avoidance motivation. Within this view, we can see how Malak's perception of the discrepancy between her L2 competence and her learning situation made her shift her learning effort in such a way that she could avoid failure after she was initially motivated by the desire to approach an idealized school successful L2 self. It is this perception of self competence which, according to Bandura (1977), functions as a precursor to the adoption of a future goal.

This condition led to the emergence of the other crucial feature of Malak's data which is the emergence of her feared L2 self and the role this self played in balancing her L2 self and in focusing her learning engagement. The importance of having a feared L2 self was particularly emphasized by Oyserman and Markus (1990), who posited that when desired possible selves are paired with feared selves, learners will have a more varied set of motivational resources that can be recruited and deployed to regulate their actions. The authors also suggested that "a given possible self will have maximal motivational

effectiveness when it is offset or balanced by a countervailing possible self (a feared self) in the same domain” (p. 146). Although this feared L2 self was not salient in Malak’s initial L2 visions when she joined the school, it was later cued by the difficulty she faced in coping with the demands of her classroom learning and as the fear of failure gradually became stronger, this feared L2 self was able to influence her learning behaviour. This seems to be in contrast to Nada’s case where, although she similarly developed an ought-to L2 self, this self was not balanced by a feared L2 self, which may partly explain the difference in the quality of learning motivation exhibited by the two participants.

An equally important finding is the observation pertaining to Malak’s ability to sustain positive and heightened levels of motivation despite her failure to attain her ideal L2 visions and despite her struggle to overcome the challenges posed by her low L2 competence. This seems to reflect Malak’s distinctive characteristics as a person who was determined to succeed and prove her self-worth and who challenged the norm which posits that learners in similar situations are more likely to adopt avoidance behaviour, withdraw from participation, and prefer to remain unnoticed in the classroom (Turner et al., 2002). This, as I discussed above, invites us to take into account the learners’ distinct identities, how they go about the obstacles they experience, what resources they can actually access, and what their desired future visions represent for them in their immediate and broader environment.

## **7.4 Conclusion**

This chapter set out to investigate the relationship between the participants’ L2 selves which were identified in the previous chapter and their L2 learning situation. To begin with, the findings of the current chapter seem to reflect a considerable agreement with

the findings of the previous chapter concerning the correlation between the classroom-specific factors and the participants' L2 selves. The overall findings in the previous chapter indicated that the classroom-specific factors characterizing the current learning situation were unlikely to contribute to the participants' motivation to pursue their ideal L2 selves especially those factors related to the teacher's role. This seems to agree with the salient findings of the current chapter which have uncovered the tension that appears to exist between the participants' ideal L2 selves and their classroom learning situation. Unlike the many studies in which the learning situation is typically idealized and the students' motivation is typically problematized (e.g., Oyserman, Bybee, Terry, & Hart-Johnson, 2004; Oyserman, Gant, & Ager, 1995), the current study shows that the current learning situation was unable to support the learners' motivation to pursue their visions as ideal competent L2 users which they brought with them to their classrooms. This poses questions concerning the wider context of the current learning situation, because the initial aim of introducing English specialized schools such as the current one to the Libyan secondary school system was to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning English in Libyan schools, as I discussed in Chapter One. I will return to this point in the following chapter for further discussion.

This tension between the participants' desired competent L2 selves and the current learning situation has influenced the participants to follow divergent pathways to balance their L2 selves with their learning situation in order to arrive at a meaningful learning engagement. The dynamics which the participants adopted to arrive at personally meaningful engagement under the current circumstances can be described as *negotiating, adjusting, adapting, balancing, and transforming* of L2 visions. Through these processes we saw how the L2 self can be capable of change, conforming to the

view of L2 motivation as inherently dynamic, evolving, and being continually involved in evaluating and regulating ongoing learning behaviour.

The above discussion has uncovered how learners with multiple desired L2 visions may allow alternative options to arrive at positive learning engagement by which these learner are able to envisage plausible L2 visions to achieve when the most prioritized ideal L2 vision is unlikely to materialize under particular learning circumstances. The current data show how Hajer resorted to her idealized instrumental L2 self, which allowed her to remain focused on her learning through which she was able to strengthen the possibility of attaining her ideal long-term future visions as well as maintaining her desired social image, even though she had realized that it was impossible for her to materialize her ideal *competent* L2 self.

This chapter has also uncovered how the L2 learning situation can substantiate particular L2 visions and marginalize others. We have seen how the current learning situation has made the ought-to L2 self salient while it marginalized the ideal L2 self by not recognizing the importance of the language skills upon which the ideal L2 self was contingent. Having been made to abandon her single idealized fluent speaking self, Nada was influenced by her learning situation to align her L2 visions and activate her ought-to L2 self, which took the prominent role in shaping her learning engagement, which appeared to be sometimes challenging and disruptive.

The analysis in this chapter has also revealed how the initial interaction between the L2 self and the learning situation can expose the extent to which the idealized L2 visions and the learning situation are discrepant and, hence, influence the extent to which the

plausibility of L2 self attainment is perceived. I have shown how Malak's original ideal visions as highly successful school self and a translator gradually began to disappear from her L2 self system as she began to experience fear of failure and direct her learning effort to avoid her newly-developed feared L2 self and seek an ought-to L2 self which she developed as a result of this discrepancy. Malak's data show the importance of having a balance between a feared L2 self and an ought-to self in maintaining positive learning motivation to pursue a desired future self. The fact that Malak was in her first term at the school seems to have influenced her to develop an L2 vision that was anchored in the realities of her own L2 ability, which has made her original ideal visions appear as fantasies.

Finally, consistent with possible selves literature, the current findings suggest that possible L2 selves can function as 'behavioural standards' (Hoyle & Sowards, 1993) and can have the qualities of 'self-regulatory possible selves' (Oyserman et al., 2004) if these selves are perceived as personally meaningful, valued, and plausible within one's L2 competence and within the learning affordances of one's classroom environment. However, in the current context the role of the learning situation was significant in mediating the participants' perception of the discrepancy between their L2 possible selves and their current selves and the possibilities of bridging the gap between the two. This is not to say, nevertheless, that the learners are only reactive pawns to the conditions imposed on them by their learning situation; they are, rather, able to negotiate and seek balance between their L2 self and their learning situation in order to invest their learning effort in the pursuit of a meaningful L2 vision. However, whether students are able to pursue a desirable self in a motivated manner depends on whether or not they can

effectively balance their possible L2 visions with their learning situation, as well as on the strength of these visions.

In the next concluding chapter, I will discuss the theoretical implications of these findings on the L2 Self System literature in combination with findings from the previous two chapters and will also discuss these implications on the teaching and learning in specialized English schools in Libya.

## ***Chapter Eight***

### **Summary and Conclusion**

This study set out to investigate the future L2 selves of the learners in English-speciality secondary schools in Libya and examine ways by which these L2 selves were related to their L2 learning experience. My aim was, first, to understand what represents the L2 selves of this particular group of students and, second, to investigate what happens to these selves as they come in contact with the daily rounds of their L2 learning situation in the classroom as well as in the broader learning context. In this section, I will summarize the main findings of the empirical study in relation to my research questions and discuss these findings in the light of the context of the existing L2 Self System literature. I will reflect on the significance of the findings within this literature both conceptually and methodologically while focusing on the contribution of the mixed-method approach to our understanding of the role of imagined futures in language learning. Finally, I discuss the implications of the current findings for supporting the learners' motivation to pursue their L2 selves in English specialized schools in Libya in regard to classroom teaching practices and conclude with the limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this area.

#### **8.1 The L2 Self in the Libyan Context**

As I have mentioned earlier, the current study was instigated with the aim of investigating how learners in the current learning context envisage their L2 selves as future users of English. This aim instigated the need to examine what characterizes these learners' L2 selves and how these characteristics resonate with the findings of studies carried out in other international contexts. To address these aims, the study produced



two sets of data: a quantitative set and a qualitative set. Both sets of data have contributed to the understanding of the characteristics of the current participants' representations of their L2 selves. The findings of the quantitative data revealed some striking similarities with findings reported by other studies carried out in different international contexts, while the qualitative data uncovered the intricate, complex and dynamic nature of these representations. Let me reflect on each set of findings in turn.

The quantitative study has produced similar as well as contrasting findings with the existent L2 self system literature. To begin with, the findings have shown that the learners in English-speciality secondary schools in Libya associated their L2 learning strongly with various possibilities of what they may become in the future, as it was shown by the significant role of the two L2 self variables in describing and interpreting these learners' motivation to learn English. Despite the uniqueness of the socio-cultural and socio-political context of L2 learning in Libya, the *ideal L2 self* of the students in the current context was found to incorporate motivational components that were identified by other international contexts as salient components of the L2 learners' ideal L2 selves. The *international posture*, *integrativeness* and *instrumentality promotion* factors were found to be significant features of the current participants' ideal L2 selves. Of particular significance is the role of the international posture factor, which emerged from this study as a salient representative of the students' ideal L2 selves. This significance of the international posture factor in the rural town of Nalut, where the L2 learners are connected to the international community only through the media, seems particularly intriguing, because it shows how the power of imagination has enabled the students to go beyond the boundaries of their rural environment to enrich their ideal L2 selves. Moreover, this result reflects the universal nature of the international posture and

echoes recent L2 self system research which contended that the English language functions as a medium through which L2 learners around the world relate themselves to the international/global community (e.g., Lamb, 2004; Yashima, 2009; Csizer & Kormos, 2009; Kormos, et al., 2011).

The current study has also provided additional empirical support to the distinction between the *promotional* and *preventive* dimensions of *instrumentality* and the positive relationship between the former dimension with the ideal L2 self and the latter dimension with the ought-to L2 self, which supports Dörnyei's (2005) proposed distinction. Unlike other international contexts in which the promotional dimension of instrumentality was found to support the learners' ought-to L2 selves such as in the Iranian and the Chinese contexts reported in Taguchi's et al., (2009) study, this study's findings suggest that the Libyan context is different in this regard which may be a result of fact that young learners in Libya do not usually relate their future careers to external influences such as the need to support their families or similar external obligations. The Libyan students' learning experience is often a solo journey that is self-planned and independent of their parents or others' involvement, and this includes the decisions they make concerning their possible future careers. On the other hand, the significant correlation between the participants' ought-to L2 selves and the preventive dimension of instrumentality suggests that some students' ought-to L2 selves are supported by their desire to avoid undesired consequences and to prevent failure.

## 8.2 The Current L2 Learning Situation and the L2 Self

The motivation to carry out the present project was initiated by my interest in the relationship between the L2 learning situation of students in English-speciality schools in Libya and their L2 selves which incorporate their future hopes, goals and aspirations which they bring with them to their classrooms. To investigate this relationship in the quantitative study, I included a set of classroom-specific variables in the student questionnaire and examined the correlation of these variables with the students' L2 selves. This relationship was then investigated in the qualitative study by expanding the concept of the L2 learning situation to include classroom-specific factors as well as the individual learners' broader learning context including their social, cultural, and historical contexts as well as their personalities, identities and agency.

The quantitative study's findings revealed that some of the classroom variables were significantly related to the L2 learning situation, while others did not show any relationship. To begin with, the *ideal L2 self* showed significant positive correlation with the *teacher competence* factor. A further analysis revealed that it was only the first-year group's data that showed positive correlation whereas the second and third year groups' data showed no correlation. The examination of this relationship through the qualitative data, on the other hand, indicated that the students whose ideal L2 selves were contingent on achieving effective L2 competence were unlikely to perceive their learning situation as able to support this particular kind of ideal L2 self. The classroom observation data indicated that the discrepancy between the ideal *competent* L2 self and the current learning situation was caused by the fact that the dominant teaching approaches in the current school did not recognize the importance of developing the

students' L2 communicative skills. The students were exposed to very little oral target language as they were rarely engaged in meaningful interaction or negotiation of meaning in the target language. The students were only required to follow instructed language usage and, hence, the students were unable to use the language freely and effectively, which is particularly evident for the two key participants who were in their final year of the school. In the light of the qualitative findings, therefore, the positive correlation showed in the first-year group results may be a result of the fact that motivation is dynamic and sensitive to the factor of *time*; in the early stages of transition to a new learning environment, students tend to have positive and high expectations regarding their teachers and rely mainly on them to fuel their future potentials and this relationship is adjusted as they progress with their studies. As they progress through their learning stages, these students may become unhappy with their teachers' competence if they are aiming for attaining L2 competence and may need to look for other sources for fuelling their ideal visions. The lack of positive relationship between *teacher competence* and the students *ideal L2 selves* which appeared in the data of the advanced group may be also a result of natural development – as their visions grow stronger, more specific and vivid, and more/less plausible, they need to rely less and less on their classroom learning situation and flourish despite unfavourable L2 learning situations.

Another significant result worth summing up here is the significant correlation between the ideal L2 self and the group cohesiveness variable. This result was particularly surprising when it was compared with the qualitative data, because the classroom observation showed that group work and group interactions were not part of the current learning situation. The students' learning engagement was characterized by its

individualistic and competitive nature, because the teachers rarely instructed them to work together on small learning tasks or large projects. This indicates that group-related factors were unlikely to be part of the students' ideal L2 selves which is not what the positive correlation between the group cohesiveness variable and the ideal L2 self factor suggests. The only explanation for this positive relationship is the possibility that the students perceived group cohesiveness through their relationship with their study-desk partners. The classroom observation data strongly suggested that pair work was a significant part of the students' learning even though this work was not instructed by the teachers. It the seating arrangement of their classroom, however, which made pair-work possible and has the potential to influence the learners' L2 selves as we saw in Malak's data.

In regard to the ought-to L2 self, the quantitative results showed significant correlations between the ought-to L2 self and the *course materials* and *teacher rapport* factors. The positive correlation between course materials and the ought-to L2 self indicates that the students' appreciation of their course materials tapped only into their ought-to L2 selves, which is in contrast with the L2 motivation literature which suggests that interest in and satisfaction with course materials are considered prerequisites of intrinsic L2 motivation, i.e., the ideal L2 self. This result may be interpreted by drawing on the qualitative data which suggested that the students' satisfaction with their course materials was more likely to be channelled through fulfilling their assessment requirements rather than through a sense of interest in and enjoyment of these materials. Because the fulfilment of examination requirements has traditionally been associated with responsibility and external pressure, satisfaction with course materials for the current participants was more likely to support their ought-to L2 selves rather than their ideal L2 selves, even though

this need not always be the case. The other significant correlation of the ought-to L2 self was with the *teacher rapport* factor which suggested that the students' perception of the rapport with their teacher was a positive contributor to their ought-to L2 selves. This result was intriguing in light of the qualitative data, which showed that the teachers maintained their traditional authoritative image, distancing themselves from being close to their students and disrupting the formality of this relationship. However, the positive quantitative results maybe a result of the fact that the students in the current learning context were expected to show respect to their teachers out of the sense of duty and responsibility without expecting to have actual rapport of friendship with them. Therefore, this may have fuelled the students' desire to please their teachers despite their realization that it was unlikely for them to be socially close to them. This means that it was natural that they will feel an urge to study harder so as not to disappoint the teacher whom they respect and, as a result, their ought-to L2 selves flourished.

The overall picture suggests that the classroom-specific factors played an intricate role with the context of English-speciality schools in Libya. The salient finding is perhaps the one suggesting that the current learning situation provided little support to the students' desired L2 selves as competent users of the L2. This finding is particularly important when we consider the fact that English-speciality schools were introduced to the Libyan educational system with the aim of improving the standards of English and enabling students to be effective communicators in English. However, for those students whose L2 selves (whether ideal or ought-to) were contingent on earning grades and performing well in their exams, the current L2 learning situation provided more support to these kinds of L2 selves. In fact, the qualitative study results showed that it was the students' perception of the nature of support that their L2 learning situation was capable of

providing to their L2 selves that has shaped their learning engagement, which I sum up in the next section.

### **8.2.1 Interaction between the L2 Learning Situation and the L2 Self**

As I have just mentioned above, the study's findings have revealed that the current learning situation was incapable of bridging the gap between the participants' desired competent L2 selves and their actual L2 selves. As a result, after the participants realized the fact that this gap was unlikely to be narrowed, they became engaged in processes of balancing, adjustment, alignment, and even transformation of their future L2 visions in order to make their learning experience more meaningful to them. This meant that, even though they had to abandon their most desired L2 vision which influenced them to become English major students, these processes enabled them to pursue an L2 vision that was made salient by their learning situation in order to find a meaning to their learning experience.

The findings from the first participant's (Hajer) data show how the L2 learner may capitalize on alternative *ideal* L2 visions that are available in her L2 self system and perceived as plausible under the conditions of her classroom learning situation. In this regard, the richness of the learner's L2 self system seen in the multiple desired future visions that she may aspire for, appears crucially important in allowing opportunities of arriving at a focused and positive learning engagement. In contrast, The findings from the second participant's (Nada) data show that when alternative ideal L2 visions are not available in the learner's L2 self system, the ought-to L2 self may be activated after the desire to live up to parents and others' expectations of school success replace the desire

to live up to the marginalized ideal L2 vision. The quality of learning engagement which results from such adjustment may not be particularly positive, since it was found in the current data to lead to disruptive and challenging behaviour because it involved the loss of a cherished ideal L2 self and the pursuit of a less cherished ought-to L2 self. The findings from the third participant's (malak) data show how the ideal L2 vision may be transformed into an ought-to L2 self when the L2 learner perceives her L2 competence as unable to support her ideal L2 vision, and the fear of failure comes into play as the L2 self becomes embedded in the realities of her classroom learning situation. When failure to approach the ideal L2 vision is attributed to the learner's L2 incompetence, this ideal vision may disappear and no longer acts as a point of comparison. As a result, a new kind of motivation may emerge as a result of adjusting and aligning the L2 self to the one's L2 competence. In the current data, it was the interaction with the L2 learning situation that prompted the learner to carry out a reality check of her L2 self which widened the gap between her actual L2 self and her ideal L2 self, leading to the transformation of her L2 self system. This may particularly take place during the initial interaction between the L2 self and the classroom learning experience as this self becomes grounded in the realm of L2 reality and departs the realm of L2 fantasy.

In conclusion, these findings suggest that although it is true that the L2 learning situation has hindered the participants' achievement of their ideal competent L2 selves, the learners were not only reactive pawns to the influences of their learning situation but were clearly able to shape the features and the course of their L2 learning experience. By capitalizing on their previous learning experience, the multiplicity of their future visions, and their unique personalities and identities, the participants were able to find an alternative focus in such a way that they could pursue an L2 vision that is



meaningfulness to their future selves. However, these findings also imply that whether the students are able to focus their learning engagement under unfavourable circumstances depends on whether they can effectively balance their possible L2 visions with their learning situation.

### **8.3 Insights from Combining the Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

The merits of combining the quantitative and the qualitative data in the current study were evident in addressing more than one puzzling result produced by the quantitative data. For example, one question posed by the quantitative results concerns the significance of the international posture factor in the current context. Because the current participants were predominantly girls (111 girls out of the 126 participants) who lived in a society where a great deal of consideration and respect is given to the rules of gender, the significance of the international posture appeared to be puzzling. This reason lies in the assumption that the participants were unlikely to identify their desired future L2 visions with an international community future because the norms and rules of gender in their society constrain girls from, for instance, travelling or working abroad independently, or communicating freely with foreigners. After zooming into the qualitative data, the significance of the international vision in the current context seemed to be a result of what can be described as *wishful thinking* or a *fantasy* that produced abstract mental visions that were not necessarily elaborate and vivid. For example, although the participants in this study incorporated the international posture component within their L2 self systems, their international posture visions lacked vividness, details of which aspects of the international experience they were interested in, and where to live this experience and in what context. Moreover, according to the participants, the

routes through which are able to travel for any reason were very limited, such as obtaining a job in an oil company or winning a scholarship to study abroad which, in turn, shows that these visions were fragile and likely to disappear when these routes become unavailable, as happened in Malak's case. Moreover, the qualitative data suggest that these cherished international posture selves were not likely to be activated through real life experiences such as travelling abroad for holidays, working abroad, or communicating with foreigners. This seems to further explain the *fragility* of the international posture vision for female L2 students in the Libyan context, which echoes Markus & Nurius' (1986) argument that possible selves are most vulnerable and responsive to the environment because they are not well anchored in the social experience.

Another puzzling finding in the quantitative data which required insight from the qualitative data in order to make sense of it concerns the *parental encouragement* factor, whose results showed that it had very little role in shaping the participants' L2 selves, in stark contrast to existing L2 Self System research. The L2 motivational research suggested that the motivational power of the parental encouragement factor is particularly evident in its strong relationship with the ought-to L2 self, which was not the case in the quantitative data. The qualitative data was able to shed some light on this result by suggesting that it may be the case that the conceptualization of the parental encouragement variable was alien to the Libyan students. The qualitative study suggested that parents' involvement in their children's learning was not communicated through frequent explicit encouragement to their children, as is understood in the western context, but it was more an implicit expectation of passing exams placed on the students by their parents. Moreover, the qualitative data suggested that the students tend

to take school success for granted once they have passed the first year, which suggests that their parents or others' expectations (i.e., ought-to L2 selves) might not play a role in motivating their learning behaviour unless when the success of passing their exams is threatened. In short, the combination of the different data sources suggest that it may be the case that the concept of *encouragement* in its conventional understanding in the western educational domain is not suitable to describe the involvement of parents in their children's L2 learning in this context, and hence bears little influence on shaping the L2 learners' motivation to pursue an L2 self.

The most significant value of the qualitative findings, after all, lies undoubtedly in illuminating the complex structure of the L2 possible self concept and the variation between L2 learners in this regard. These data have revealed that while for some learners the future L2 self system can be represented through a unitary L2 vision, others' L2 self systems can be represented through overlapping arrays of different L2 visions reflecting various potential self-conceptions that are not necessarily solely academic, but are likely to incorporate desired social visions seen as incentives associated with the achievement of the academic L2 self. Such multiple visions appear to occur in hierarchical structures because particular visions are prioritized over others and different degrees of importance are assigned to each vision. This appears to be in contrast to the way the ideal L2 self has been represented in relevant studies, that is, a single L2 vision that is either ideal or ought-to.

## 8.4 Implications for the L2 Self System Literature

If our concern with the L2 Self System is to broaden our understanding of L2 motivation and ways in which the L2 self may orchestrate learners' language learning behaviour, this study suggests that it may be fruitful to consider the view of the L2 self as a multiple construct, the dynamics through which multiple L2 visions interact with the L2 learning situation, and how this interaction consequently influences the different courses of action. Related to the issue of dynamicity, this study also calls for the need to keep the L2 self system in line with the view of motivation as a process-oriented phenomenon, because the current findings suggest that the L2 self is capable of change, adjustment, and adaptation in response to the contextual cues in a given L2 learning environment. Such an approach to the L2 self system is particularly important when we seek to understand how a learner's ongoing L2 learning experience supports or hinders the achievement of their cherished L2 selves. In fact, this resonates with the original conceptualization of possible selves in regard to their strong association with the dynamic properties of the self-concept such as motivation and social change, which give "direction and impetus for action, change, and development" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p.960). A quick glance at the empirical L2 Self System research suggests that this research has yet to incorporate the potential richness of the multiple and process-oriented view of L2 self system to capture what could not be captured by the current dominant view of the L2 self portrayed by the quantitative method as a fairly uniform, monolithic structure, consistent over time, and reflecting stable motivational orientations. However, interesting insights have already begun to emerge (e.g., Kim, 2011) and researchers will need to continue in these efforts to gain deeper understanding of the complex nature of L2 future visions. Perhaps the complexity theory (Larsen- Freeman, 1997) would be a

useful approach to capture the nested and intricate relationship between the L2 self, the L2 learning situation, and L2 learning behaviour, through which the diverse perspectives of language learning research can be accommodated and, indeed, integrated

## **8.5 Implications for Teaching and Learning in English-Specialized Schools in Libya**

This study has brought to light the importance of classroom pedagogies in fostering the students' motivation in English-speciality schools in Libya to pursue their desired L2 selves. There has been a strong belief among L2 researchers that L2 learners' motivation is related to the teacher's motivational practice. In the context of English-speciality schools in Libya, the need to support the students' L2 motivation is even greater because L2 learning for these students is strongly associated with their future as possible professional users of English. Therefore, the need to foster these students' learning expectations, future hopes and ambitions which are encapsulated within their L2 selves is crucially important if our aim as L2 specialists in Libya is to help these students bridge the gap between their classroom learning experience and the fulfilment of their future aspirations. In line with this argument, I believe that the findings of this study offer some useful points in this regard for the L2 teacher in English specialized secondary schools in Libya, which I will list below:

- The first recommendation concerns the importance of *recognizing* the influence of the English-speciality secondary schools on the students' learning expectations, goals and future aspirations, that is, their L2 selves, as a prerequisite to supporting their L2 selves. This study has shown that the students in the current school brought to their classrooms learning

expectations and future goals that were very different from those we often encounter in learning contexts where students study English as a compulsory school subject. The data have revealed that the students in these schools were likely to anchor their learning expectations and their selves in the achievement of effective communicative and/or grammatical L2 competence. In fact, one can argue that L2 learners usually come to their classrooms with unrealistic expectations of L2 achievement, but I would argue that the introduction of English-speciality schools in Libya has made the students who choose to join these schools rightfully entitled to hold such high expectations of L2 competence, because their academic as well as career future becomes contingent on how good they are at English. Therefore, it may be the time for EFL policy makers in Libya to take these expectations into consideration and look for practical steps to bridge the gap between the students' desired L2 selves and what their classroom L2 experience offers them. This seems even more possible to happen in the light of the very recent political change in Libya.

- A first step in this direction is perhaps to address the gap between teaching practice and the curriculum syllabus. Despite the fact that the current curriculum has been modernized according to the principles of interaction and the integrated learning of the four language skills as part of a reform initiative, there was an evident lack of harmony between what the course materials meant to achieve and the teachers' actual practice. Therefore, the planners of EFL policy may need to examine the factors that have made the teachers unable to endorse the learning goals of the current course materials as part of

their teaching practice. This study has shown that, even though it was true that the teachers struggled at times to deliver particular components of the current course, it was actually their beliefs about what should be taught that made them systematically skip particular activities and tasks because they marked them as ‘unimportant’. It is my belief, shaped by my involvement in this study, that there is an urgent need to provide support and guidance to the teachers in English-speciality schools in Libya (or at least in the current school) in order to bridge the gap between what these schools fundamentally aim to achieve, that is, the development of effective L2 competence, and the actual teaching practice in the classrooms.

- A further step forward, therefore, that the educational authorities in Libya may take is to bring the L2 teacher to the centre of their reform agenda once they have established these schools as an integral part of the Libyan educational system, provided the appropriate facilities, and modernized the curriculum. Needless to say, without improving the standard of language teachers, the English-speciality schools will remain unable to meet their fundamental objective, which is improving the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of English in Libya. It may be time now for the educational authorities to develop L2 teacher training programmes and to make these crucially needed programmes an integral part of L2 teachers’ professional development. This is, of course, if the aim is to address the ongoing problem of EFL education in Libya, that is, the inability of the EFL classrooms to develop effective L2 competence. It is important to mention that this study was not designed to address the exact needs of the L2 teacher in this study’s context, but it did

identify the need to bridge the gap between actual L2 teaching practice and the reformed curriculum. However, some relevant studies which have investigated the gaps between EFL reform initiatives in the Libyan context and the teachers' implementation of these initiatives in their classrooms, such as Orafi and Borg's (2009) study, can be an asset in this regard.

## **8.6 Limitations of the Study**

There are several limitations of this study, which I believe lie mainly in the methodological aspect. To begin with, the quantitative study could have been used in a more complementary way by carrying out a post-study questionnaire to capture the developmental and/or the changing aspect of the L2 possible selves over the academic year. This would have provided data which could have enriched and strengthened the claims made by the qualitative data. The idea of a post-questionnaire, however, occurred to me after the first questionnaire had been administered; this was not designed to serve as a pre-questionnaire which made carrying out a post-questionnaire impossible.

Another possible limitation of this study concerns the issue of representativeness. Because this study is fundamentally concerned with English-speciality schools in Libya, investigating only one school might have limited the findings and meant that some potential important factors in regard to the current research questions remained uncovered. However, the fact that there is only one school of English-speciality in each region meant that carrying out ethnographic research in more than one school would require travelling long hours daily to be sufficiently present at more than one research site, which would have been practically challenging.



A final limitation of this study concerns the presentation of the data, as the limited space of a PhD thesis has forced me to leave out some interesting data. For example, some valuable data that concern the linguistic behaviour of the participants in regard to their use of their native language (Berber) in the classroom are not included in this thesis because in order to present these data I would have had to substantially extend the discussion to do this theme full justice. I believe, however, that these findings will provide a good source of further research and reflection which I hope to develop in further publications, one of which is currently in press (Asker & Martin-Jones, in press).

## **8.7 Opportunities for Further Research**

Additional research should be directed toward investigations of the relationships between the L2 self and the factors specific to the classroom learning situation. Although this study suggests that possible selves are not necessarily generated in classrooms, it also shows that the effect of classroom learning on keeping these selves alive and active depends on the extent to which these selves are supported by the classroom learning situation. The current study proposes that future research should examine the developmental dimension of the ideal L2 selves in relation to the various variables specific to classroom-situated learning over an extended period of time and perhaps beyond one academic year.

Future research should also build on the current qualitative analysis regarding the relationships between *multiple* L2 self structures and motivated learning engagement. Of particular importance in this regard is highlighting the interplay between the *academic*

L2 self and its *social* dimension, which emerged in the current study as worthy of further investigation. The current study suggests that motivated learning behaviour is rarely influenced by academic selves alone, and the desired social selves are likely to orchestrate motivated behaviour.

Finally, in learning contexts where issues of gender inequality are salient, it would be beneficial for future research to investigate the relationship between the nature of the L2 selves of male and female adolescent students and the gender roles characterizing their socio-cultural norms. The current study indicates that there are perhaps particular merits in examining this relationship in light of the extent to which the learners progress in their studies and near the attainment of their L2 selves. That is, considering how temporal distance can influence the learners' perception of future selves and how these selves shift as learners actually get closer to attaining their goals.

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## **List of Appendices**

Appendix A: Questionnaire: List of scales (English)

Appendix B: Questionnaire: Final Arabic version

Appendix C: Sample unit of Skills Book

Appendix D: Sample transcription of interview

Appendix E: Sample transcription of field notes

Appendix F: Pictures of the research site

Appendix G: Sample of student diary (Malak)

## APPENDIX A

### Items and Composite Variables Used in Student Questionnaire

#### **The Ideal L2-Self**

1. If my dreams come true, I will use English effectively in the future. ( 2)
2. I can imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English. (4)
3. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English. (8)
4. I can see myself as a successful user of English in the future. (15)
5. I can imagine a situation where I am speaking English with foreigners. (19)
6. I can imagine myself speaking English with international friends or colleagues. (22)
7. Whenever I think of my future career, I imagine myself using English. (26)
8. When I think about my future, it is important that I use English. (29)
9. I often imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English. (32)

#### **The Ought L2-Self**

10. I study English because close friend of mine think it is important. ( )10
11. I have to study English, because, if I do not study it, I think my parents will be disappointed with me. (16)
12. Learning English is necessary because people surrounding me expect me to learn it. (20)
13. My parents believe that I must study English to be an educated person. (36)
14. I consider learning English important because the people I respect think that I should do it. (40)
15. Studying English is important to me in order to gain the approval of my peers/teachers/family. (45)
16. Studying English is important to me because an educated person is supposed to be able to speak English. (49)
17. Studying English is important to me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of English. (53)

#### **The Feared L-Self**

18. I worry about failing my study. (2)
19. I worry about letting my parents and my friends down if I failed. (7)
20. I worry that my English will not be good enough. (58)
21. I worry I might up drop out of the school. (63)
22. I can imagine myself jobless as a result of failing my study. (67)
23. Thinking of failing my study makes me work harder. (70)

#### **The Intended L2-Effort**

24. It is extremely important for me to learn English. (3)

25. When an English course is offered to me, I usually join it. (12)
26. When I hear an English song on the radio, I listen carefully and try to understand all the words. (23)
27. I can honestly say that I am really doing my best to learn English. (27)
28. Whenever access to English-speaking TV stations is available to me, I usually watch them. (38)
29. I spend lots of time studying English. (46)
30. I think I expend a lot of effort in learning English. (51)
31. I would like to study English even if it was not required. (71)

### **Parental Encouragement**

32. I am often told by my parents that English is important for my future. (5)
33. My parents encourage me to study English. (24)
34. My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible. (31)
35. My parents think that I should really try to learn English. (40)

### **Instrumentality Promotion**

36. Studying English can be important to me because it will be useful in getting a job. (6)
37. Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future. (33)
38. Studying English is important because I am hoping to study abroad. (43)
39. I study English to keep updated with the recent news and advances in the world. (54)
40. Studying English is important because with English I can work globally. (60)
41. Studying English is important because it offers a challenge in my life. (77)
42. Studying English is important for in order to obtain higher social respect. (83)

### **Instrumentality Prevention**

43. I have to study English because without passing English I cannot graduate. (9)
44. I have to learn English because failing to pass my exams means I will not get my degree. (11)
45. Studying English is important for me because I will be frustrated if I got bad grades in English. (30)
46. Studying English is important for me because I do not want to be considered a poorly educated person. (47)
47. Studying English is important for me because I do not have the knowledge of English I will be considered as weak student. (56)
48. I have to learn English because I do not want to fail my study. (64)

### **International Posture**

49. Studying English is important because it is an international language. (13)
50. If I could speak English, I could get to know people from other countries (not just English speaking countries). (14)
51. I am learning English because it will help me to understand people from all over the world. (21)
52. I would like to be able to use English to communicate with people from other countries. (50)
53. I often read and watch news about foreign countries. (65)



- 54. I want to make friends with international people in Libya. (75)
- 55. Learning English is important to me because I would like to travel internationally. (80)

### **Integrativeness**

- 56. I like to travel to English-speaking countries. (17)
- 57. I like the people who live in English-speaking countries. (35)
- 58. I like meeting people from English-speaking countries. (44)
- 59. I like to know more about people from English-speaking countries. (52)

### **Teacher Competence**

- 60. Most of my teachers are really good teacher. (18)
- 61. Most students in my class do not understand the way our teachers are teaching. (34)
- 62. Most of my teachers are nice persons. (39)
- 63. Most of my teachers have good sense of humour. (57)
- 64. Most of my teachers are patient with students whose English is difficult to understand. (78)
- 65. New ideas are always being tried out here. (79)
- 66. Most of my teachers can get angry easily. (85)
- 67. We don't always follow the course-book. (89)
- 68. Students are often asked to choose how they want to learn. (92)
- 69. Students have very little to say about how class time is spent. (94)

### **Student-Teacher Rapport**

- 70. Most of my teachers like all students in this class. (25)
- 71. If students want to talk about something most of my teachers will find time to do it. (28)
- 72. Most of my teachers treat students like friends. (55)
- 73. Most of my teachers take a personal interest in students. (68 )
- 74. Most of my teachers like picking up on some students in this class. (81)
- 75. Most of my teachers go out of his/her way to help students. (90)
- 76. Most of my teacher care about the students. (92)

### **Group Cohesiveness**

- 77. Students in this class get to know each other really well. (37)
- 78. I could work easily with most of students in this class. (42)
- 79. There are some people in this group who do not really like each other. (71)
- 80. A lot of friendships have been made in this class. (76)
- 81. I like most of students in this class. (86)
- 82. Students in this class aren't very interested in getting to know other students. (93)

### **Group Goal orientedness**

- 83. Students put a lot of energy into what they do in this class. (48)
- 84. Most students in this class really pay attention to what the teacher is saying. (59)
- 85. Very few students take part in class discussions or activities. (62)

- 86. Students in this class usually stop working if the teacher is not paying attention. (66)
- 87. This class is more a social hour than a place to learn something. (69)
- 88. The teacher hardly ever has to tell students to calm down. (73)
- 89. Students don't do much work in this class. (82)
- 90. Students in this class don't usually get the work done if the teacher is absent. (87)

**Course Materials**

- 91. Some of my course materials are too difficult for me. (61)
- 92. Sometimes I feel I can hardly cope with the materials in this course. (72)
- 93. Sometimes I do not understand what I read or listen to. (84)
- 94. I am satisfied with my text-books and course materials. (88)

**APPENDIX B**

**The Arabic Version of the Student Questionnaire**

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						<b>94</b>

## Appendix C

### Sample Unit from the Skills Book

# Unit 7

## The skill of reading

### SK7.1: Understanding a message

#### A When was the last time ...

- ... you wrote a message? What was it about?  
Who was it to? What language was it in?
- ... you got a message? What was it about?  
Who was it from? What language was it in?

#### B When we write a message, we must make these points clear:

- Who is the message from?
- Who is the message to or for?
- When did we write the message?
- What is the message about?
- What do we want the other person to do?

#### We must also think about:

- What type of message am I writing – note, memo, letter, e-mail ...?
- What type of language do I need to use – formal or informal?

Look quickly at the messages on the opposite page. What is the connection between them?

#### C Fill in the chart with the information from each message.

#### D Look again at Message 1. Fill in the missing letters.

#### E We often leave out words in messages. Look at Message 2. Use the words in the box to write it again as a letter.

you can at dear there the is yours

Example: *Dear Frances*

#### F We often use special abbreviations in messages. Look at Message 3.

- What does *asap* mean?
  - as soon as you can
  - as soon as possible
  - as fast as possible
- What does *re* mean?
  - regards
  - subject
  - rescue

Message	What type ...		Who ...		When ...	What ...	
	of message	of language	is the message from?	is the message to/for?	did he or she write the message?	is the message about?	does he or she want the other person to do?
1.			?	anyone who finds it	?		
2.						problem with ship	phone Martin urgently
3.		formal					
4.	e-mail						



SK7.1: cont.

**G** Look at Message 4.

1. Write in the words that are missing.
2. Find three abbreviations.

**1** I' \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ERE ON AN ISLAND. TH \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ R \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ARE  
NO OTH \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ PEOP \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .  
MY SHIP \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ WENT DOWN \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ 2 DAY \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ AGO. I HA \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
SOM \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ FO \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ D BUT HAVE ALREADY FINISHE \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
TH \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ WAY \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . PLEASE RES \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ E ME  
Q \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ICKLY

**H** Discuss in pairs.

1. What will happen to the man on the island?
2. Would you like to be trapped alone on an island? Why (not)?

**2** Frances -  
Martin phoned 6pm from ship. Some  
problem. Call him back urgently. Sheila

**3**  
**FAX**  
**TO:** Lionel King  
**FROM:** Charles Gray, Head Office, Trinidad  
**TIME:** 15.30  
**DATE:** Saturday 14th October  
**RE:** SS Jupiter  
**MESSAGE:** Please contact me asap re missing  
ship. Have already sent out rescue services. Need  
to know last position

**4**  
e-mail, 6.46 pm, e-mail  
Send  
From: "Steve Williams" stevew@headnews.co.net  
To: "Catherine Jones" cathjo@newsdesk.co.uk  
Subject: Sea story  
Date: Friday 13th October 18:46  
X-MSMail-Priority: Very Urgent  
Content-length: 197  
Getting reports of missing ship near Trinidad. Have no more information yet but could be  
interesting story. Have already booked you on Trin. Airlines Flight No. TR456 from Heathrow  
tonight 22.55. Pls e-mail me when you get there.  
Steve

## The skill of speaking 1

### SK7.2: Conversation – apologies and requests

#### A Read Conversation 1 in pairs.

1. Fill in the gaps with suitable words from the box.

help sorry can I'm number giving

2. Check your answers in groups.
3. Read the conversation in pairs again.

#### Conversation 1

Secretary: Good morning, can I \_\_\_\_\_ you?

Catherine: Oh hello, you must be Steve's new secretary. \_\_\_\_\_ I speak to him please?

Secretary: I'm \_\_\_\_\_, Mr Williams is working from home this morning.

Catherine: Oh dear, it's very urgent. Could I have his home \_\_\_\_\_?

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_, afraid we can't give out home telephone numbers.

Catherine: But I work for him. My name is Catherine Jones. Would you mind \_\_\_\_\_ me the number?

Secretary: I'm very \_\_\_\_\_ Miss Jones, but rules are rules. Please phone later. Goodbye.

#### B Read Conversation 2 in pairs.

1. Listen to Conversation 2. True or false?
  - a) Catherine is phoning Steve.
  - b) Steve apologizes to Catherine.
  - c) Steve's new secretary has left her job.
  - d) Catherine is angry with Steve.
  - e) Catherine wants to tell Steve about the missing ship.
2. Read Conversation 2 again to check answers.

#### Conversation 2

Catherine: Hello, Catherine Jones.

Steve: Hi Catherine, it's Steve. I believe you wanted to talk to me.

Catherine: Steve, who is that terrible woman in your office? She wouldn't give me your number!

Steve: Oh I'm really sorry, Catherine. That was my new secretary, Rosemary.

Catherine: Was?

Steve: Er, yes. She left this afternoon. Anyway, I do apologize if she was rude.

Catherine: Oh, don't worry about it. Now, can I tell you the news about the ship? Well ...

#### C Study the language in both conversations. The people apologize in several different ways.

Example: *I'm sorry.*

1. Find three more ways of apologizing.
2. Which phrase is the most formal?
3. Which phrase is the most informal?

#### D Study the conversations. The people make requests in several different ways.

Example: *Can I speak to him please?*

1. Find two more ways of making requests.
2. Which is the most formal?
3. Which is the most informal?

#### E Cover the conversations. Try to remember them from these prompts.

#### Conversation 1

Secretary: / morning, / help / ?

Catherine: / hello / you / Steve's new secretary. Can / speak / him / ?

Secretary: / sorry, Mr Williams / working / home this morning.

Catherine: Oh dear, / very urgent. / have / home number?

Secretary: / afraid / can't give / home /.

Catherine: But / work / him. / Catherine Jones. / mind giving / number?

Secretary: / sorry Miss Jones, / rules / rules. / phone later. Goodbye.

#### Conversation 2

Catherine: Hello, Catherine Jones.

Steve: / Catherine, / Steve. I believe / wanted / talk / me.

Catherine: Steve, who / terrible woman / office? / wouldn't give / number!

Steve: Oh / really sorry, Catherine. / new secretary, Rosemary.

Catherine: Was?

Steve: Er, yes. / left / afternoon. Anyway / apologize if / rude.

Catherine: / don't worry / Now / can / tell / news / ship. Well ...

## The skill of speaking 2

### SK7.3: Making apologies and requests

- A** Ways of apologizing.
  1. List ways of apologizing.
  2. Discuss your list with a partner.
- B** Ways of making requests.
  1. List ways of apologizing.
  2. Discuss your list with a partner.
- C** Check your lists by referring to the conversation on page 80.
- D** Look at the following six situations for making requests. Decide if they are formal or informal. Then write the request using the appropriate phrases.
  1. Someone to send you a document by email.
  2. To borrow a friend's book.
  3. To speak to Lisa.
  4. Someone to send you tourist information by post.
  5. To get a ride to friend's house.
  6. To speak to Mr Warren of PI Electronics.
- E** Imagine it is not possible to agree to the above requests. Write a reply using the appropriate language.
- F** Practise the six exchanges in pairs.
- G** Look at the picture. What is happening?



- H** Read the conversation between Noura and Jameela in pairs.  
Conversation
 

Noura: Can I come round this evening, Jameela?

Jameela: Sorry, I'm busy this evening.

Noura: But I wouldn't stay long.

Jameela: I'm really sorry, Noura, but I'm very busy.

Noura: Oh, please, Jameela. I need to talk about tomorrow's homework. Could I come round early?

Jameela: I'm afraid I won't be back until seven. Could we talk about it now?

Noura: Oh, I wish I could ... but I've got to go shopping now.

Jameela: Well, if shopping's more important ...

Noura: OK, I suppose I could spare half an hour.
- I** Role plays in pairs!
  1. In pairs, agree how to divide equally the six situations below.
  2. Prepare your three requests.
  3. Think about how to respond if your request is turned down.
  4. Role play the conversations. Try to extend each one for as long as possible as in the conversation in Exercise F. If you are successful you might be able to persuade your partner to agree!
    - a) To borrow money from a friend.
    - b) Phone number and address of Mrs Cameron.
    - c) Buy extra ticket for cinema from booking office.
    - d) Help with homework from parent.
    - e) Order a book at a bookshop.
    - f) Help with class work from teacher.

## The skill of writing 1

### SK7.4: Taking phone messages

- A** You are going to write some phone messages. Here are fifteen words you may need. Guess the words and add the missing vowels.

1. ph \_ n \_ d
2. c \_ ll \_ d
3. m \_ ss \_ g \_
4. \_ rg \_ nt
5. f \_ \_ nd
6. \_ nt \_ rv \_ \_ w \_ d
7. t \_ m \_ rr \_ w
8. \_ \_ rp \_ rt
9. r \_ c \_ pt \_ \_ n
10. \_ p \_ l \_ g \_ z \_
11. s \_ rry
12. m \_ \_ t
13. r \_ \_ d
14. m \_ ch
15. w \_ lc \_ m \_

- B** Phone messages are taken down in note form.

Example:

Notes: Keith Marshal. Meet tomorrow. 10.30.

Reception/Colchester Hotel

Message: Keith Marshal will meet you tomorrow at 10.30 in the reception of the Colchester Hotel.

- C** Understanding notes

1. Look at the phone messages a) to d) below. What do you think they mean? Write what you think they mean in full.
2. Discuss what you have written with others in the class.
3. Decide whether the messages were clear or not. How could you improve them?
  - a) Michelle Hutchins. Call her, Mirabelle Hotel after 5pm
  - b) Richard Bell. Cancel meeting Monday. Reschedule to Tues 11am.
  - c) Liz. Dinner tonight. Her house 7pm? Call back.
  - d) Jim. Swimming? Meet 3pm, his house. Confirm.

- D** Fill in the blanks in the phone conversation using the words in A.

Secretary: Hello, can I help you?

Catherine: Yes, can I speak to Steve Williams please?

Secretary: I'm \_\_\_\_\_, he's in London this morning. Can I take a \_\_\_\_\_?

Catherine: Yes please. Could you tell him Catherine Jones \_\_\_\_\_ from Trinidad? I've found Martin Clark and \_\_\_\_\_ him. I'm coming home \_\_\_\_\_. Could he meet me at 6.45p.m. at Heathrow?

Secretary: Right Miss Jones, can I just \_\_\_\_\_ that back to you? You're phoning from Trinidad. You've found Martin Clark and interviewed him. Could Steve \_\_\_\_\_ you at 6.45p.m. at Heathrow \_\_\_\_\_?

Catherine: Perfect, thanks very \_\_\_\_\_.

Secretary: You're \_\_\_\_\_. Have a good trip home.

- E** Read the phone conversation in pairs.

- F** Cover the text and answer these questions.

1. Who does Catherine want to speak to?
2. Why can't he speak to her?
3. What does Catherine ask the Secretary to do?

- G** Read the conversation again in pairs. Tick the important information in the message.

Catherine Jones	
Phoned from Trinidad	
Good weather	
Arrived yesterday	
Found Martin Clark	
Very nice person	
Interviewed him	
Took 3 hours	
Coming back tomorrow	
Arriving at 6.45p.m.	
Heathrow airport	
Has not got a lot of luggage	

- H** Using the notes in D, write the message for Steve.

## The skill of writing 2 & 3

### SK7.5: Phone calling and making requests

#### A Look at the phone conversation in SK7.4 again.

1. Underline the requests made and write them out in your notebook.
2. What words do the requests start with?
3. What is the word order for requests?  
Complete the equation with the words from the box.

object	question word	verb	subject
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ + _____ + _____ + _____ ?			

4. Do the example below.

I	message	can	a	leave
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ ?				

#### B Write a conversation in pairs. Make sure you use formal or informal language where needed.

1. Julie Taylor is phoning Ted Stuart to arrange a meeting tomorrow at her office. Ted is out so Julie leaves a message with his secretary.
2. Nicholas is calling Andrew to organize a football game. Andrew is out so Nicholas leaves a message with his family.

#### C In pairs, role play the conversations you wrote in B.

1. Use another pair as an audience to listen and write down the message they hear.
2. Check that their message is correct.
3. Take turns to listen to each others' conversations and take down the messages.

#### D You want to phone a friend and remind him about your plans for tonight. Write down these details.

1. What is your friend's name?
2. Where are you meeting him tonight?
3. What time are you meeting?
4. How can he contact you if there are any problems?

#### E Work in pairs.

##### Student A

You phone your friend. Unfortunately he isn't there, so you must leave a message with his father. Speak slowly and clearly.

##### Student B

Your son's friend phones. He has a message for your son. Write the message down. Ask him to repeat or spell anything you don't understand.

### SK7.6: Writing a conversation with requests and apologies

#### A Write a conversation between two people. Include at least five requests and three apologies. Choose from one of the situations below.

1. A teacher and student going over school work, asking for help and offering advice.
2. A parent and child talking about what to do for the child's birthday party.
3. Two business people, retailer and manufacturer, discussing details of a new business contract to buy clothes.
4. Two friends chatting about going to a party and what to bring, wear, etc.
5. Boss and employee talking through job tasks to be done.

#### B Edit your dialogue.

- Check grammar: tenses, question/apology words, word order ...
- Check spelling: specific vocabulary
- Check punctuation: Contractions, ? ! ...

#### C Read the conversation in pairs.

1. Read the conversation with another pair of students as an audience.
2. Elicit from the listeners what requests and apologies were made.

## Lab work 1

### LP7.1: Functions – apologizing and making requests

**A** Listen, read and repeat the conversation.

A: Good morning Madam. I'm doing a survey.  
Could I ask you some questions?

B: Yes, of course. What kind of survey is it?

A: It's about shopping. Would you mind telling me your name?

B: Of course not. It's Mrs Louise Barratt. Can I put down my bags?

A: Yes, sure. Why not put them here?

**B** Listen and repeat these phrases.

*Could I ask you some questions? Yes, of course.  
Can I put down my bags? Yes, sure.*

The first request is formal, the reply is formal.  
The second request is informal, the reply is informal.

**C** Now record your voice. Listen to the speaker and reply with *Yes, of course* or *Yes, sure*.

Examples:

You hear: Can I open the window?

You say: Yes, sure.

You hear: Could you tell me your phone number?

You say: Yes, of course.

1. Could I borrow your car?
2. Can I have a coffee?
3. Could I look at your phone book?
4. Can you tell me the time please?

**D** Now you make the request. Use *Can I* or *Could I*?

Examples:

You hear: watch TV (can)

You say: Can I watch TV?

You hear: have a chocolate (could)

You say: Could I have a chocolate?

1. leave early (can)
2. change the channel (could)
3. stay up late tonight (can)
4. look at your newspaper (could)

**E** Now use *Can you ...* or *Could you ...*

Examples:

You hear: take a message (could)

You say: Could you take a message?

You hear: cook dinner tonight (can)

You say: Can you cook dinner tonight?

1. take Jimmy for a walk (can)

2. meet John at the airport (could)

3. do the shopping for me (can)

4. check the e-mail (could)

**F** Listen and repeat these phrases.

*Would you mind passing the salt?*

*Of course not.*

Remember that *Of course not* in this case means:  
*OK. No problem.*

**G** Make the request using *Would you mind ...?*

Example:

You hear: talk more quietly

You say: Would you mind talking more quietly?

1. lend me your pen
2. answer the telephone
3. help me with the housework

**H** Listen, read and repeat the conversation.

A: Ow! You just stood on my foot!

B: I'm very sorry.

A: Oh that's OK, I've got another one!

**I** Now record your voice. Listen to the speaker and reply with *I'm very sorry*.

Example:

You hear: Hey! That's my bag!

You say: Oh, I'm very sorry.

1. My name's Jane, not Mary.
2. You're really late. I've been here for an hour.
3. You forgot to do the shopping.

**J** Now reply more formally. Use *I do apologize*.

Example:

You hear: Your secretary was very rude to me.

You say: I do apologize.

1. Waiter, this steak isn't cooked.
2. Excuse me, I gave you £20 not £10.
3. Why didn't you return my phone call?

## Lab work 2

### LP7.2: Spoken language – /s/ and /z/, /aʊ/ and /əʊ/

#### A Repeat these sounds.

1. /s/ /s/ /s/
2. /z/ /z/ /z/
3. /aʊ/ /aʊ/ /aʊ/
4. /əʊ/ /əʊ/ /əʊ/

#### B Repeat these words.

1. so / see / stuff / post / house / this  
plants / wants / list / talks
2. zoo / Zoe / zebra / news / bills / days  
present / does / goes / organize
3. now / how / mouth / house / about  
loud / found / out / down / south
4. no / go / sew / don't / home / phone  
hotel / know / low / notice

#### C Circle the words you hear in each group.

	a	b
1.	Sue	zoo
2.	know	now
3.	phoned	found
4.	loose	lose
5.	load	loud
6.	goats	goes
7.	dust	does
8.	a boat	about

#### D Listen and write the missing word in each sentence.

1. Are you going \_\_\_\_\_?
2. Walk around the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We went to the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. So \_\_\_\_\_ are you?
5. He often \_\_\_\_\_ out at night.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ she like Libya?
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ were moving in the wind.
8. I'm going out \_\_\_\_\_.

#### E Say these sentences.

1. He loves the zebras in Zoe's zoo.
2. You sometimes see Sue sewing socks.
3. Does he often lose his shoes?
4. This zone is so easy to find.

#### F Say these sentences.

1. Oh no don't phone home.
2. How about going around town?
3. Jo found Tony's house outside town.
4. Round and round the Romans rode.

#### G Say these sentences. Be careful! 'sb' does not have the /s/ sound.

1. She sells sea shells on the sea shore.
2. She sometimes goes out and does the shopping.
3. I found her on the phone in the hotel lounge.
4. Several soldiers saw zebras east of the zoo.

## Listening development

### LP7.3: Gesture and body language

- A** Italians use a lot of body language when they speak. Look at these gestures from Italy. Try to match them to the meanings in the box.

so-so I don't know / understand  
I forgot how are you? what do you want?  
you're crazy just a little bit



- B** Label the pictures with these words.

thumb index finger hand arm hips  
stomach cheek earlobe

- C** Listen straight through once. Choose the best TV guide description of the programme.

**8.30 What Do You Know?**

Tonight's programme looks at the gestures of Italy.

**8.30 What Do You Know?**

Tonight's programme talks to Italians about gestures in their country.

**8.30 What Do You Know?**

Tonight's programme is about gestures and what they mean in different countries.

- D** Listen to the first part again. Check your answers to Exercise A.

- E** Fill in the missing words.

'A gesture is any action that sends a visual \_\_\_\_\_ to an onlooker. To become a gesture, an act has to be \_\_\_\_\_ by someone else and has to communicate some piece of \_\_\_\_\_ to them.'

- F** Listen to the second part. True or false?

1. Italians don't have many gestures.
2. It is rude to point in Belgium and Zambia.
3. If you stand with your arms folded in Latin America, it means you are angry.
4. When the Yoruba people of Nigeria want a child to leave the room, they wink.
5. In Bulgaria, if you nod your head it means 'yes' and if you shake your head it means 'no'.
6. In Brazil and Italy, if you enjoy a meal you pinch your earlobe between your thumb and index finger.
7. Visitors really need to learn two languages when they visit a foreign country.

- G** Work with a partner. Discuss these questions.

- a) Which gestures do you and your family members use regularly?
- a) Do different parts of your country have different gestures? Give examples.
- a) Why do people use gestures and not words? Make a list with your partner.  
Example: *You can see them from a distance.*

- H** The 'no gesture' game. Most people find it impossible to give instructions or to describe objects without using gestures. Try to play this game without using your hands.

1. One person leaves the room. While he/she is gone the other students decide on an object, for example a book, a window, a chair.
2. The student returns and goes to the blackboard. One by one, give him/her instructions so he/she draws the object. Do not say the name of the object!
3. The student must try to guess what the object is as quickly as possible.



## The skill of listening

### LP7.4: Identifying key information

- A** Look at this list of household tasks. Match the verbs and nouns.

- |            |                      |
|------------|----------------------|
| 1. wash up | a) the clothes       |
| 2. clean   | b) the dishes        |
| 3. iron    | c) the house         |
| 4. water   | d) the indoor plants |
| 5. cook    | e) the furniture     |
| 6. make    | f) the bed           |
| 7. polish  | g) the shelves       |
| 8. go      | h) the meals         |
| 9. dust    | i) the carpets       |
| 10. vacuum | j) shopping          |

- B** We sometimes make verbs for household tasks into nouns with *-ing*. Then we use *do* as the verb.

Example: I wash up the dishes every day.  
I do the washing up every day.

Change these sentences in the same way.

1. My mother cleans the house every day.
2. My sister irons the clothes in the evening.
3. My father sometimes cooks the meal on Friday.
4. I never dust the shelves.

- C** In your house, which jobs:

1. do you do always / sometimes / never?
2. does your mother / father do?
3. does your sister / brother do?

- D** You are going away for ten days. A neighbour is coming to look after your house. Look at the list in Exercise F. Tick the most important jobs your neighbour must do.

- E** Listen to the conversation between Frances and her friend Lizzie.

1. Why is Frances going away?
2. Where is she going?
3. How long is she going for?

- F** Listen again and tick the jobs that Frances asks Lizzie to do.

<input type="checkbox"/>	water plants
<input type="checkbox"/>	feed cat
<input type="checkbox"/>	hang out washing
<input type="checkbox"/>	iron clothes
<input type="checkbox"/>	go shopping
<input type="checkbox"/>	do the cleaning
<input type="checkbox"/>	do the polishing
<input type="checkbox"/>	do the dusting
<input type="checkbox"/>	take out rubbish
<input type="checkbox"/>	post letters
<input type="checkbox"/>	check e-mail

- G** There are some sentences in the conversation that use the present perfect with *already* or *yet*.

1. Study these examples from the conversation.
2. Underline examples of present perfect with *yet* or *already*.

Lizzie: Hi Frances. Any news?

Frances: Yes, wonderful news. They've found Martin. He's OK.

Lizzie: That's fantastic. Have you spoken to him yet?

...

Lizzie: What about letters? Do you want me to post anything?

Frances: No, I've already done that. But could you check the e-mail every day? I'll send you a message when I get there.

Lizzie: Of course. OK, I'd better let you go. Have you packed yet?

Frances: No, not yet. I'm not as organized as you.

- H** Work in pairs. Use the list of jobs in Exercise F. Ask your partner if he/she has done the jobs. Answer *yes* for the jobs with ticks and *no* for the jobs with no ticks.

Examples: Have you watered the plants yet?  
Yes, I've already done them.

Have you fed the cat yet?  
No, not yet.

## Pronunciation 1 & 2

### LP7.5: /s/ and /z/

- A** Put these words in the correct column. If /s/ or /z/ do not appear in the word, do not put them in either column.

Words	/s/	/z/
wants	wants	
news		news
Frances		
shopping		
post		
bills		
message		
rubbish		

- B** Look at these words.

sometimes summer shopping see  
ship stay stuff so

- Which words have the sound /s/?
- Listen and check your answers.
- Complete the pronunciation rule.

When a word starts with the letter    we always pronounce it /s/, unless it is followed by the letter   .

- C** Look at these words.

zebra organize Zoe soap zoo  
size Lizzie prize price

- Which words have the sound /z/?
- Listen and check your answers.
- Complete the pronunciation rule.

We always pronounce the letter    as /z/.

- D** Look at these words.

was has does goes says buys rise raised

- What is strange about them?
- Listen and check your answer.
- Complete the pronunciation rule.

We sometimes pronounce the letter    as /z/ after a vowel sound.

- E** Tongue twisters. Say these sentences.

- Zed's zebra slowly goes past the zoo's stables.
- Sue's snakes sneaked southwards at sunrise.

### LP7.6: /aʊ/ and /əʊ/

- A** Study these examples.

/aʊ/	/əʊ/
house	home
now	know
found	over

- B** Look at the conversation.

- Do the underlined words contain the sound /aʊ/ or /əʊ/?

A: Hello Sophie, how are you?

B: Fine, Joe, how about you?

A: Very well. I've bought a new house in town.

B: Wow! That sounds exciting! Which part of town?

A: The south, in Stone Lane. Sorry. That's my mobile phone. I must go. Bye!

B: Bye, see you around.

- C** Say the words below. Make sure your partner can hear the difference.

- house      hose
- doubt      don't
- found      phoned
- cow      code
- gown      go
- sound      sewed

- D** Read this conversation with your partner.

A: Can we go home now?

B: Oh no, come on, don't go home yet!

A: I'm so tired. I want to sit down!

B: Only one more time around these houses. Then we'll go home.

A: OK. But go slowly this time!

- Are these people:
  - jogging?
  - going for a walk?
  - driving?

2. How do you know?

3. Mark the /aʊ/ and /əʊ/ sounds.

- E** Try to write a short conversation with your partner using the /aʊ/ and /əʊ/ sounds.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Sample of Transcribed Interview (First Interview with Nada, 30/9/2009)**

**I: Why did you choose to specialize in English?**

N: I liked English since I was in the primary school. I liked my primary English teacher who taught me in fifth and sixth grade who made me like English. I did very well in English in the primary school and always had high marks. I like English, I like the way it sounds and whenever I see someone speaks English I wanted to imitate him. I watch a lot of English TV and even though I still cannot understand everything I listen to, I enjoy listening to English.

**I: did you do well only in English or did you generally do well?**

N: I have always done very well in the school in all subjects but English was my favourite subject and my English teacher was my favourite teacher. She made me want to speak English as spoke it. After the first year I studies English, I started watching cartoons in English and I felt exciting when I recognized some words I know. I can tell you that the first teacher was the best I have had so far. I was taught by two different teachers in the preparatory school but they were not as good as her.

**I: what is it exactly was good about her?**

N: many things. I can tell you one thing; I honestly believe that she is better than my current teachers. She spoke English more and she was friendly when she needed to be

and tough when she had to be. Her character was nice and everyone liked her in the classroom.

**I: So, are you saying that she is the main reason that made you like English and choose to major in English?**

N: I can say that she made me begin to like English and want to speak English like here.

**I: This is about the past, how do you see yourself in the future as an English user.**

N: I am hoping that I will be able to speak very good English in the future. That is how I see myself.

**I: you are not thinking about a career? Can you see yourself using English in a profession?**

N: I do not know what I want to do. I only want to be good in English and speak it well.

**I: let's say you have graduated with good language skills; you can speak well and you have good grammar knowledge, in what way will you use these skills?**

N: you mean a job?

**I: a job or something similar?**

N: I do not know. I am not thinking about teaching but I will have to think then. If I manage to become competent and fluent in English as you have said, then that would be a big achievement. I know I should but there are many choices to choose from. I mean if I have to think about a job it has to be teaching and I am not really keen on teaching in schools.

**I: Why does it have to be only about teaching?**

N: well, you know our society, what else can women work apart from teaching. I know there are women who have different jobs but they are few because not everyone can do this. People expect girls to become teachers when they graduate because this is the reality of our society. I am just not thinking about what I will do after I graduate. I mean I did not join this school to be a teacher or something else but I joined the school because I wanted to speak English.

**I: Where and with whom do you see yourself speaking English in the future?**

N: what do you mean by where?

**I: I mean is here or in another town or country?**

N: I am not sure where because you never where life will take you. But I guess I will be talking with friends who want to speak English. I do not really but may be because speaking for me is just a skill that I want to have because I like to speak English and if I can speak it well in to future, I am sure there will many people to talk do.

**I: Okay. What do your parents think of your study? Do they encourage you to study?**

N: Not at all. It is very rare they would ask how I am doing at school. I mean it is not like they do not care but they do not ask. My father usually gives me a lift to the school and asks me if I needed money or something else. I mean it is this kind of care but not like he would want to know what my classroom performance is going. It is like in the case of my mother, when I say that I do not feel like going to school, she would tell off and force me to change my mind and does all the house work to make

feel me feel comfortable but she did not finish her school and she has no idea about what I am learning and that why she does not ask.

**I: Is there someone else who influences your study such as a friend or a relative?**

N: I do not think so. It is only my friends at the school

**I: A lot of students how study English plan to travel abroad, what about you?**

N: who does not like travelling but there is a difference between what you wish and you actually get. If I was a boy I will definitely plan for travelling abroad but in my case how am I suppose to travel abroad? All the women who travelled abroad went like spouses of their husbands and this the only way that a girl would travel abroad. I know a friend of mine how won a scholarship to study abroad but she could not travel abroad until she got engaged and married because she could not travel alone and even if she want to her family would let her travel alone.

**I: Let's talk about your English classes now, do you enjoy them?**

N: I do not think so. Well sometimes I do but most of the time no, I do not enjoy them. In the first year, I really liked enjoyed the classes but last year I was really bored. We are still in the beginning of this year now but I do not expect that the classes will by different judging from the first week. You know, sometimes when there is an interesting activity or when we discuss something interesting in the class I can feel like enjoying it but this is very rare. I told you that I like speaking and I like to speak the language in the classroom. I started to get disappointed in the first year after I found that the teachers were speaking Berber most of the time and very little English was spoken. I get really frustrated when the teacher goes on talking without stopping so I usually say something to break this boring routine even with a silly remark or a

question which make teachers dislike me. I think many teachers think I am an ill-disciplined because I talk a lot in the class when I should not talk.

**I: Can you think of a positive experience in the classroom?**

N: I cannot think of any this year, we have just started last week?

**I: can you think of last year?**

N: I will tell about the first year, I think it is the best thing happened for me in this school.

It was an Egyptian teacher who taught us grammar for three weeks in the first year before she had to go back to Egypt for good. She was very good and different because she was able to guide the class and make grammar easy. She was particularly good at controlling the class and making everyone pay attention to her when she wanted to and she could be funny and chatty when she wanted to. Her command of spoken English was so good and she spoke English more than she spoke Arabic. During the last class, she cooked a cake at home and brought to say goodbye. She was able to understand what students really wanted from an English class. That was the best thing I had in this school but I was very disappointed when she had to leave.

**Q- How did this experience influence your learning now?**

R – It was two years ago but I still remember this teacher the same I remember my teacher in the primary school. I would like to be able to use English like these two teachers but sometimes I look at myself and think I will not be like them because after two years in this school I am still far from their level. Both these two teachers like me because to be honest when I like my teacher I really work hard and try to impress her.

End of Interview

## APPENDIX E

### Sample of refined Field notes from one class (Nada's data)

Participant: Nada

Class: Conversation/Speaking

Date: 22/11/2009

time	Context	Description	Reflective Comments
9:45	A conversation class. Unit 6: <i>Describing the location of objects</i>	The teacher continued from where she was left the previous class. The students read took turns asking about the location of items as instructed by the text book. Nada remained quiet and hasn't spoken at all.	The class was quite in general as the students. The lesson content seems to be focused on the use of the propositions in describing locations but this emphasis is not being explicit by the teacher. The class is more like a reading class than a speaking/conversation one.
10:15	End of the lesson: an expected exchange between the teacher and Nada	The teacher finished her lesson 15 minutes before the end of the class and told the students that she finished. Nada asked the teacher if the class could go out. The teacher told her if you want to leave nobody will stop you but do not drag the class with you.	Nada remained silent throughout the lesson and when she spoke she did in behalf of the whole class asking for permission to leave early. She did look bored but I wonder why she did not ask permission for herself only. The teacher's response clearly reflects her anger.
10:20	The students are looking at the next new lesson in silence as were told by the teacher who sat at her desk	At this moment, Nada shut her book and leaned on her desk. She started whispering to her partner than she started collecting her things and put them in her bag. The teacher noticed what Nada was doing but she ignored her. Nada then stood and walked to the door without saying a thing. The teacher looked at her but said nothing.	That was an extreme attitude from Nada. It was clear that she was bored and not interested in the class but she often looked like that but never walked out. I felt some tension existed between the two and the teacher's reaction was not solely a result of a Nada's request to leave but she is clearly not happy with Nada's behaviour in general.
10:58	The class is finished students are waiting for the teacher to leave	After the teacher picked up her things and was ready to leave she suddenly said "this classroom could have been the best class if four or five students were not in it". The teacher left immediately after that.	I felt that the comment was directed to Nada and the rest of her group including Hajer who was absent today. The group have already been mention as disruptive because of their excessive questioning and comments. I see this incident as an example of disruptive behaviour by Nada but it seems, however, that her behaviour was influenced by the climate of the class in which she looked very bored and not interested.



## Appendix F

### Pictures from the Research Site



## APPENDIX G

### Sample of Student Diary (Malak)

أناظروا إلى المدرسة بكل إحترام فهي وسيلة إلى الرقي و  
التعلم وأناظروا إلى موظفيها وبالأخص إلى مدوينة ومدرساتي  
بكل أدب وإحترام فهم كما علمت هم راحتي وأخوتي وأتمنى  
منهم أن ييسر لي جميعاً إذا أخطأت معهم أو تكلمت  
عنهم بسوء .

أما عن هدي الذي حدثت عنه فأنا مضرة على هذا  
الهدف ولن ألتفتل عنه مهما كلفني حياي كلها فالإنسان  
بدون هدف لا يساوي قرشاً واحداً وسأحول هذا العلم  
إلى حقيقة بإذن الله تعالى .

لقد مر على هذا الفصل بصعوبة في البداية ولكن مع مرور

الوقت أصبح سهلاً بفضل الله سبحانه - تعالى - .

لقد كان له تأثير كبير في هذه السنة تحسنت عن السنة الماضية

وخاصة في Pronoun Writing Speaking Grammar

كما المواد الثانية تحسنت بأنه لا يوجد فرق بين هذه

السنة والسنة الماضية سوى تغير المنهج في بعض المواد

أصبح سهلاً والبعض الآخر أصبح أصعب .

لكن هذا لم يؤثر على شخصين إطلاقاً بل بقيت كما هي

شخصيتي التي تتغير .